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ABSTRACT

This document contains information from and about the Pan-Canadian Forum on Community Learning Networks (CLNs) that was conducted to identify existing and emerging needs of CLNs and identify emerging trends and issues related to CLNs. The document begins with a discussion of role played by CLNs in building a lifelong learning culture. Presented next are summaries of the salient features of the presentations of forum participants, who represented organizations such as the following: The Learning Enrichment Foundation; Port au Port Community Education Initiative; Women and Rural Economic Development; Lumby Community Internet Access; St. Albert Continuous Learning Community; Distance Learning Systems; Societe pour l'apprentissage a vie; University of Sudbury's Ojibwe Language Program; and Learner's Advisory Network. Concluding the document are the following: summary of forum working groups' sessions conducted to identify the elements of a CLN "tool kit"; forum recommendations; and plans for the follow-up conference. Appendixes constituting approximately two-thirds of the document contain the following: information about the forum organizers; "Learning in the 21st Century: New Roles, New Benefits, New Responsibilities and New Challenges" (Jacquelyn Thayer Scott); "CLN Forum Wrap-up" (Lucille Pacey); and names/addresses of forum participants. English and French versions of the forum discussion guide prepared by Doug Knight are also included. (MN)

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Conference Proceedings

Pan-Canadian Forum on Community Learning Networks

March 27-29, 1998

Office of Learning Technologies
Bureau des technologies d'apprentissage



Human Resources Development Canada
Développement des ressources humaines Canada



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Background

The First Pan-Canadian Forum on Community Learning Networks was held March 27-29, 1998 in Ottawa, Ontario. It was co-sponsored by the Office of Learning Technologies (OLT) and Contact North/*Contact Nord*.

The Forum brought together champions of a diverse range of community learning networks (CLNs) from across Canada, as well as people interested in furthering our understanding and use of technologies for learning. For a list of participants, see the Appendix section of this document.

The Forum featured presentations by representatives of existing and emerging CLNs, as well as working group sessions wherein participants contemplated tools that potential CLN champions could use to support learning networks in their communities.

The Role of CLNs in Building a Lifelong Learning Culture

Technologies are tools helping to facilitate the creation of a lifelong learning culture — one that will support the emergence of a knowledge-based economy. As David Roberts of Connect NB Branché told Forum participants, "Brains are in, heavy lifting is out. That's true for today, and it's true for tomorrow."

Our current institutions are being challenged to help learners access the skills and knowledge needed to participate in today's economy and society. This is stimulating the exploration of new venues to meet learners' needs — venues that can respond to the types of learning required in the 21st century.

Technology fuels this momentum. By its very nature, technologies have the potential to bring the world into one's home, workplace, or community learning centre with incredible speed.

Today's challenge is to manage this potential effectively, and ensure that all individuals or groups of Canadians have access to these new learning opportunities using technologies.

The Forum was seen as a focal point to establish a network of Canadians interested in discovering more about technologies for learning and exploring their potential to enable Canadians to acquire the skills and knowledge they need. Organizers identified five main desired outcomes:

- 1. Identify existing and emerging models of CLNs.*
- 2. Share lessons learned.*
- 3. Connect and network with others.*
- 4. Identify emerging trends and issues.*
- 5. Contribute to the development of a tool kit of successful strategies, tips and expertise.*

CLN Forum Presentations

CLN champions from across the country shared their experiences with Forum participants through a variety of presentations held throughout the weekend. They identified some of the issues they faced in their own CLN work, and the critical success factors that have determined the continued existence of their CLN today. The salient features of some of these presentations are provided below.

1. David Roberts — Connect NB Branché, New Brunswick

The infrastructure underlying Connect NB Branché is a provincial network of Community Access Program sites across New Brunswick, especially in rural areas. Connect NB Branché exploits this infrastructure to offer residents access to innovative training programs at a distance. According to David Roberts, promotion and marketing have been key to the program's success. Connect NB Branché markets itself as a low-cost alternative to traditional training, and as an efficient access point to training for rural residents. The group also re-evaluates its functions regularly to ensure its offerings are of value to the community, and to seek innovative additions to its portfolio of services. One example is the on-line first-year Bachelor of Arts program, set to roll out soon.

The key to sustainability is avoiding a cycle of government dependency, says Roberts. Connect NB Branché has a few key "revenue generators." According to Roberts, these are like "anchor stores" in a shopping mall — those stores that bring people in. Some key market generators are its high school courses for rural residents, and its on-line business mentoring and training program. This ties into the "value-added" service approach Connect NB Branché takes: if the service is valuable, people will pay for it. CLNs must be market-driven, warns Roberts. Tapping the potential of the third sector and of the private sector and other partners is also key. Connect NB Branché seeks out powerful partnerships with firms like Microsoft and NB Tel, and works to create a good balance between paid staff and volunteers. It has also fostered an innovative approach: experienced recipients of the program "give something back" by helping those who are just beginning.

2. Sue Rickards — Selby Associates, New Brunswick

Sue Rickards' expertise lies with extremely marginalized communities — those whose members are left out of the economic or social mainstream of the dominant society. As a result, they have developed their own culture of dependency. These groups have unmet basic needs, and little or no experience with responsibility. "Social" problems are common. Rickards works to empower the members of marginalized communities, so that they can direct their own transition from dependency to self-sufficiency. Rickards sees CLNs as having a critical role to play in the development of marginalized communities.

One major issue surrounding the success of CLNs in marginalized communities is mobilizing their support, says Rickards. To help in that area, Rickards offers the following advice: understand the real needs of the target group — income, inclusion, independence and initiative; bring activities to the local level; let communities identify their own needs; involve communities in decision-making and management, but be aware of skill levels so you don't overwhelm anyone; be flexible about timeframes; provide logistical support (transportation, childcare, refreshments and a comfortable, non-intimidating learning environment); and make participants partners in learning.

3. Eunice Grayson — The Learning Enrichment Foundation, Ontario

The Learning Enrichment Foundation's (LEF) primary mission is community economic development in the Brampton area of metropolitan Toronto. Its client community features the highest unemployment rates in metropolitan Toronto, the lowest incomes, the highest newcomer population, the highest illiteracy rates, many single-parent homes, and young dropouts. According to Eunice Grayson, CLNs must generate revenue if they are to survive in the long term. LEF has become an Internet Service Provider (ISP) in the community; the organization is currently selling accounts, and hopes the program will be profitable soon. Its computer help desk also generates income; a woodworks program pays for itself through the sale of furniture.

Grayson also talked about the importance of partnerships — not charitable-based partnerships, but ones driven by business interests. For example, LEF is

a "Microsoft Certified Solution Provider." The bottom-line benefits to both parties involved in an alliance such as this can help ensure the relationship's durability. LEF is currently investigating a similar arrangement with Bell Canada. This would allow LEF to train people to work in the Bell environment.

4. Beverley Kirby — Port au Port Community Education Initiative, Newfoundland

The Port au Port Community Education Initiative (CEI) is a comprehensive learning network that operates in the Port au Port area of Newfoundland. It uses alternative technologies — particularly community television — to provide residents with access to learning opportunities they wouldn't otherwise have. A primary driver to mobilizing the participation and support of Port au Port residents has been what CEI representative Beverley Kirby calls "participatory communications" — a grassroots-driven process whereby people take control of the technologies and use them for learning. This creates a sense of self-confidence, self-reliance and pride in the community. Key to this grassroots initiative has been: a respect for local knowledge and knowledgeable ways of doing things on the part of organizers; the involvement of the community in the planning process; and positioning of facilitators as peers or encouragers rather than teachers. A focal need is to humanize and demystify the technology.

Involving other organizations and volunteers is key. The Port au Port CEI currently has more than 20 partners who sit on its board of directors.

5. Carol Rock — Women and Rural Economic Development, Ontario

Women and Rural Economic Development (WRED) is a non-profit organization dedicated to offering women in rural Ontario access to training to develop and upgrade marketable skills. One of the issues Carol Rock raised in her presentation was the need for sustainability: WRED is entirely supported financially through membership fees. Rock also says WRED sees technology as a tremendous tool for levelling the playing field in terms of skills acquisition. The key is to get the right technology for the right group.

6. Harry Adam — Lumby Community Internet Access, British Columbia

Lumby Community Internet Access (LCIA) is an Internet access program that offers residents in the Lumby area of British Columbia free access to the Internet. Community access points are located at local schools. The LCIA was launched in response to the major barrier for Lumby residents: access to the technology.

According to Adam, one of the keys to the LCIA's success has been strategic financing: the ability to put a small amount of dollars in the right areas. The LCIA has also been actively working at developing and implementing revenue-generating programs. Among these are computer and Internet training courses, the formation of a local Internet Service Provider (ISP), and the creation of an alliance of Web page designers including youth, volunteers and professionals.

7. Perry Kinkaide, St. Albert Continuous Learning Community, Alberta

The St. Albert Continuous Learning Community was initiated as a celebration of lifelong learning. Through celebration, it was hoped that St. Albert residents, who already enjoy one of the highest education and income levels in the country, would become more motivated to pursue continuous learning.

Perry Kinkaide says CLN champions must remember to get the community to work with what it has. Partnerships, participation and innovation are key. For example, the St. Albert CLC has developed a "learning credits card." Residents who undertake learning endeavours are given "credits," which are redeemable in many local shops and service areas.

8. Sandy McAuley, Distance Learning Systems, Northwest Territories

A framework for community learning networks in the Northwest Territories (NWT) emerged as a result of extensive consultations with key NWT stakeholders, conducted by the territory's Department of Education, Culture and Employment over the 1993-94 period.

The NWT community learning network framework proposes two main foundations for learning: heritage, language and culture; and information networks.

Possibly the most visible manifestation of the effort to develop a viable community learning network has been the territorial government's support for a digital communication network, or DCN. This will provide all 58 NWT communities with equitable access to modern, high-speed data communication. The network is expected to be fully operational by October 1998.

9. Louise Sauv , Soci t  pour l'apprentissage   vie (SAVIE), Quebec

The mission of the Soci t  pour l'apprentissage   vie (SAVIE) is two-fold: first, to bring together a network of Quebecers interested in learning via information technologies; second, to have network participants share their experiences, lessons learned and successes in order to foster innovation and contribute to the development of a culture of lifelong learning in the province. One of the biggest issues SAVIE faced was how to create and foster a sense of "community" among a geographically dispersed group of people from a variety of sectors, who used different technologies.

The first step for SAVIE was to get to know its membership, which it did via a questionnaire. It then adopted a multisectoral approach, drafted a strong mission statement, and initiated projects which called for the collaboration of diverse groups to create and maintain a momentum among its members. A sound structure was established to, among a variety of tasks, research financing possibilities, provide liaison with similar national and international organizations, explore partnership opportunities, keep abreast of the latest developments on the technological front, and conceive and produce training tools for learners and educators using technologies. One of the key tools was an on-line forum, which is scheduled regularly.

10. Mary Ann Corbiere — University of Sudbury's Ojibwe Language Program, Ontario

Mary Ann Corbiere is a teacher of the Ojibwe language whose students are primarily Aboriginal; initially, she believed that creating access to the course

for students on reserve by offering it at a distance through correspondence would increase enrolment, interest and perhaps even success rates.

Initial data dispute this theory. While initial enrolment was up, a higher percentage of distance students than those on-site dropped out of the course formally or simply stopped handing in assignments. Corbiere recognizes that distance education does not seem to be working for her Aboriginal target group, and that research must be done to ascertain why and remove those barriers.

11. Aubrey Cormier — Société éducative de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, Prince Edward Island

This endeavour provides an opportunity for PEI's small, remote francophone community to break free from their isolation. By accessing French education and training materials over the Internet, residents can prepare themselves for a role in the emerging knowledge-based society. The program not only establishes a technical infrastructure network, but a human network as well. The goal? Community development.

Cormier identified several issues facing the success of CLNs, among them planning, sustainability, and content. Because sustainability relates chiefly to revenue, Cormier's group has found a way to resolve these last two issues in one swoop. His group is working to prepare Internet and multimedia education and training products in French to respond to a shortage in the market. Revenue will be generated from their distribution and sale. Cormier's advice for CLN champions? Focus on the human side of the equation. Don't talk too much about the technology, or you'll scare people away.

12. Craig McNaughton, Learner's Advisory Network

The Learner's Advisory Network is a new program within the national Movement for Canadian Literacy. The Movement for Canadian Literacy is based in Ottawa, but the Learner's Advisory Network extends across the country. Members advise clients — these can be private-sector companies, government, or other groups — on how to communicate (be it through signage, packaging labels, advertisements or other) in a way that illiterate Canadians can understand. Revenue is used to fund literacy programs.

Elements of a CLN Tool Kit

Forum participants were divided into six diverse working groups for a total of three sessions on Saturday and Sunday. The groups were asked to: identify the broad issues that emerge with the creation and maintenance of community learning networks in Canada; and to make use of participants' experience and lessons learned to identify elements to be placed in a CLN "tool kit." Future CLN champions could access the "tool kit" to assist with their own initiatives.

Several themes and descriptions of the desired functionality of a CLN tool kit emerged out of these working groups:

1. Getting off the ground

- ▲ *how to write a business plan;*
- ▲ *how to choose an appropriate model for your network;*
- ▲ *a list of the information that's available.*

2. Best-practices and networking information

- ▲ *a list of existing CLNs;*
- ▲ *a repository of successful community development strategies;*
- ▲ *a repository of CLN success stories, with their critical success factors;*
- ▲ *a who does what database;*
- ▲ *encourage human contact through provision of contact numbers and addresses;*
- ▲ *a list of "avoids" or mistakes*
- ▲ *a mentor on-line program;*
- ▲ *a community exchange program;*
- ▲ *develop a network of francophone experiences.*

-
3. Partnerships
 - ▲ *how to choose partners;*
 - ▲ *how to involve community television and radio;*
 - ▲ *how to negotiate partnerships;*
 - ▲ *partner evaluation tools.*
 4. Governance
 - ▲ *governance models;*
 - ▲ *leader's guide;*
 - ▲ *advocacy board development.*
 5. Sustainability/Finances
 - ▲ *funding/finance (budgeting models, in-kind as well as cash);*
 - ▲ *how to manage volunteers;*
 - ▲ *how to recruit volunteers;*
 - ▲ *how to facilitate community involvement;*
 - ▲ *identify and provide information on government funding sources;*
 - ▲ *how to market/promote the CLN;*
 - ▲ *marketing CLNs – best practices;*
 - ▲ *how to recruit, retain, and organize volunteers in teams.*
 6. Technology
 - ▲ *tools to demystify technology;*
 - ▲ *lists of alternative technologies;*
 - ▲ *how to select and implement the appropriate technology;*
 - ▲ *how to use the technology (i.e., set up a videoconference).*
 7. Content – “that which fills the pipe”
 - ▲ *evaluation of resources;*

-
- ▲ *directory of training programs;*
 - ▲ *analysis of non-formal learning programs (evaluation, cost, etc.);*
 - ▲ *how to adapt material for French use.*

8. **Learning tools**

- ▲ *creativity/lateral thinking tools;*
- ▲ *a guide for learners who want to take part in CLNs;*
- ▲ *how to create an environment for learning;*
- ▲ *evaluation of resources;*
- ▲ *understanding learning styles;*
- ▲ *understanding target groups – operating where they're at, aligning policies with needs and realities;*
- ▲ *understanding learner motivation and how to eliminate demotivating factors.*

9. **Monitoring/evaluation/assessment tools**

- ▲ *surveys;*
- ▲ *program evaluation tools;*
- ▲ *"determinants of health" tools;*
- ▲ *general indicators of a healthy CLN.*

Existing tools

1. *Industry Canada kit Chebucto Suite;*
2. *Student Connection, AUCC, ACCC;*
3. *Digital Literacy Skills, Electronic Frontier Foundation;*
4. *Managing volunteer boards – Grant McEwan College;*
5. *50/50 Management – Prospects Literacy Edmonton;*
6. *Building Online Communities (www.web.net).*

Overall Recommendations

- ▲ *Involve public libraries — they're already networked, have the technology, know their communities, and have an inherent interest in learning.*
- ▲ *Establish an awards and recognition program for continuous learning.*
- ▲ *Let the people come, then build it.*
- ▲ *Lobby in effort to enable communities to have access to technology.*
- ▲ *Create better community-built ramps.*
- ▲ *Promote hardware and software as well as training and support.*
- ▲ *Sensitize government staff to local realities.*
- ▲ *Communicate innovations.*
- ▲ *Include the "third sector."*

What's Next?

Follow-up Conference

A follow-up on-line conference to the First Pan-Canadian Forum on Community Learning Networks will be held in both English and French from June 8 to June 19, 1998. This follow-up conference is intended to:

- ▲ *continue the discussions and information exchange begun in the home groups last March;*
- ▲ *invite the participation of interested parties who were not present at the Forum in Ottawa;*
- ▲ *provide further input on a framework for the development of a tool kit on CLNs;*
- ▲ *assemble additional elements for the tool kit;*
- ▲ *provide Forum participants with another opportunity to network; and*

▲ *add to our knowledge regarding CLNs, the effective use of technologies and how they can stimulate the CLN process, etc.*

Discussion is in asynchronous format (not in real time). This means discussion will appear as a threaded message. Participants can sign on at any time of day or night, and there is time for reflection between comments.

The English on-line conference will be moderated by Lyndsay Green of Training Technology Monitor, based in Toronto. Ms. Green has a significant amount of experience moderating on-line conferences.

A moderator for the French on-line conference will be identified shortly.

Tool Kit Development

The Office of Learning Technologies has hired a consultant to draft a possible framework for the development of a CLN tool kit, based on the results of the CLN Forum and the on-line follow-up conference. An initial framework should be released this summer, and will be made available for comment.

Appendix A

About the Forum Organizers

The Office of Learning Technologies

As a partner in building a culture of lifelong learning, the federal government established the Office of Learning Technologies (OLT) within Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC). The OLT's job is to raise awareness about the opportunities, challenges and benefits of technology-based learning and act as a catalyst for innovation in the area of learning and skills development enabled by technologies.

The OLT's vision is to contribute to the development of a lifelong learning culture in Canada. Its mission is to work with partners to expand innovative learning opportunities through technologies. To fulfill this mission, the OLT works to meet three program objectives:

- ▲ *to promote the effective use of learning technologies;*
- ▲ *to support the assessment, research and testing related to the use of learning technologies; and*
- ▲ *to increase the availability and sharing of knowledge and quality information about learning technologies.*

Contact North/ Contact Nord

Operating throughout Northern Ontario, Contact North/ *Contact Nord* is Canada's largest distance education network. This network allows learners and educators to meet with each other, defying the barriers of distance, sparse population and climatic extremes. As a result, faculty, teachers and trainers are able to reach their students in 130 communities throughout an area encompassing over one million square miles. In the past year alone, more than 10,000 learners in 600 courses received education and training that would otherwise have been out of reach.

Contact North/ *Contact Nord*'s mandate is to:

- ▲ *improve access to formal and informal education and training;*
- ▲ *collaborate with Aboriginal people, Francophones and people in remote communities of Northern Ontario to meet identified learning needs; and*
- ▲ *support innovation in education and learning.*

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Appendix B

Learning in the 21st Century: New Roles, New Benefits, New Responsibilities and New Challenges

A presentation to The First Pan-Canadian Forum on Community Learning
Networks, 27-29 March, 1998

by Jacquelyn Thayer Scott, Ph.D.

President & Vice-Chancellor

University College of Cape Breton

Instead of beginning with some theories about what lies ahead and then citing the evidence supporting them, let's turn the process around. Turning the usual process around is a bit like that joke about country and western music. ... If you play a country and western song backwards, what do you hear? The dog springs back to life, your honey comes back home, the truck runs again, and so on. So let's start with some indicators around us, and see what theories we can develop from those.

To illustrate the point that these indicators are numerous, and everywhere, I've taken two days' reading of Canada's self-styled "national newspaper," the *Globe and Mail*. For no particular reason, I chose Friday and Saturday papers from last week, March 20 and 21. I also only went through three sections of the Saturday paper, because otherwise we'd be here for a very long time, filling out what is already a long list of headlines which point to the future, as well as the present. Let's go through a few of those headlines...

1. "SPECIALTY CHANNELS CHANGE TV PATTERNS"

This article talks about how TV viewing is changing — both in terms of time devoted to it and what is watched — with the growth of new specialty channels (we now have 44 in Canada, with more to come). Broadcasters are reporting that "fragmented viewing patterns are triggering advertising spending shifts and bold new (corporate and marketing) strategies." Specialty channels are where viewers find "the interesting stuff" and "people want more focused programming that fills their individual needs."

Viewers are watching a little less television overall — broadcasters believe this is because of more interest in spending time on the Internet — but “conventional” channel share of the audience has dropped from 65 per cent to 52 per cent in the past few years. The specialty market is still far from being saturated, broadcasters believe. After all, look at the magazine industry — there are more today than ever before, catering to a wide range of specialized readers interests.

And, like magazines, some of the new specialty channels are owned and operated by the old “conventional” TV broadcasters, and they are administratively lean and mean, often buying all their content rather than producing it.

(Hmmm ...what might be the implications of all this for how the education and training sector will operate in the future? ...)

2. “ECONOMIC RENEWAL CONFERENCE”

This ad invites business managers, economic development managers and entrepreneurs to attend a national conference on economic development opportunities in Aboriginal communities. The expected political and bureaucratic speakers are there, but so is Kevin Francis, the new CEO of Xerox (and a Cape Bretoner, I might add). Another case of large companies taking an interest in the potential for niche opportunities in smaller and growing markets.

3. “CORPORATE GREEN TURNS RED”

Poor Terence Corcoran is having apoplexy again in this column, but the fact-based incident is fascinating. Michael Phelps, Chairman and CEO of West-coast Energy, a major producer, gave a speech to the Globe 98 Conference in Vancouver in which is provided a favourable view of the “Triple Bottom Line” thesis. Originally the notion of John Elkington, this view of 21st century business goes beyond sustainable development. Not only must business look at environmental impacts of what they do, but they must also look at the social equity impacts. A balance is required among the three.

“The extent to which the environment is becoming less relevant to sustainable development was evident at Globe 98,” Corcoran writes. “Even climate change, which dominated much of the sessions, is seen by some as merely a vehicle for a larger social agenda.” At an early session, Maurice Strong, who

looms over the global machine driving out of the United Nations, said all the efforts to reduce emissions and save the environment efficiently should not lose sight of the main objective, the "overall goal." And that goal, Strong said, is to create a "new economic basis for flows of money to the developing countries."

4 "TRADEABLE EMISSIONS JUST A GAME"

Clearly, that Vancouver Conference was fertile ground for Corcoran, because he writes again in the Saturday edition about the popularity of the notion of "tradeable emissions." This notion was part of the Kyoto Protocol signed internationally last December, but was not defined. It grabbed onto the success of the sulphur trading system adopted in the U.S. to reduce acid rain. But sulphur is less complicated than other emissions relating to greenhouse gas issues, and Corcoran raises questions about how such trades can be controlled — who defines and redefines them? Will it be governments, the multinational corporations, what Corcoran views as "a cabal of trade protecting green activists and Third World aid seekers, corporate reformists, sustainable development gurus and ambitious politicians?"

5. "WHO'S POOR AND DESERVING?"

This column from Peter Cook in Brussels describes how the world of the European Union is changing. From being an organization of (largely rich) 15 countries, which could "afford" agricultural subsidies and large-scale regional development grants, it will soon have 21 members, and all of the new ones are poor. Richer countries are unlikely to want to give more; those now receiving largesse because they are relatively poorer are unlikely to want to dispense with subsidies which have equalized their living conditions.

Those of you who have become devotees of the Irish series, Ballykissangel, now shown on PBS and Vision, will appreciate this problem from the episode where Eamon the Shepherd builds wooden sheep for his hillside because his pub buddies convince him that the European Union now has satellites that are less easy to fool than its gullible agricultural subsidy inspectors...

6. "GET MORE BANK FOR YOUR BUCK"

This feature article talks about the growing popularity of such banking options as those provided by PC Financial (available from your friendly

Loblaw's or Super-Valu store), the Bank of Montreal's MBanx, and Citizens Bank. These new entities have no branches — all business is done by telephone and PC, and they offer lower charges but less flexibility to negotiate deals. Conversely, the article says, they are forcing mainline banks to compete either on service (personalized touches and supplements) or on price.

The article notes also that you no longer have to shop around or make phone calls to find out comparative account deals. Just go to the Office of Consumer Affairs site on Industry Canada's Strategis Web site, and the information is all there.

7. "MICROSOFT TOPS LIST OF BEST-PERFORMING COMPANIES"

Bill Gates does it again. This time, *Business Week's* annual tally of best-performing companies in the Standard & Poor's 500 Index lists Microsoft as #1, over last year's Intel winner. Criteria include top-line revenue growth, earnings growth, total returns over one and three years, net margins and return on equity. For every dollar in sales, Microsoft earns 29.7 cents.

For what it's worth, the rest of the top five annual winners are also technology companies — Dell Computer, Cisco Systems, Intel and Compaq Computer. Among the big losers were Oracle Corporation — a technology company heavily vested in one operating language — and Nike (it dropped from #7 last year to #64 this year), which has been doubly hit by public awareness campaigns about its "sweatshop" production practices and by being caught with too much inventory in the Asian money crisis.

Technology, and more technology, leisure/lifestyle products, and social equity issues...

8. "SPYING COMES IN FROM THE COLD WAR"

This interesting feature focuses on economic espionage — wiretapping, prostitutes, hackers, and all the ingredients of a good John Le Carre novel! This time, CSIS, Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin all agree — spying has shifted from military to economic goals. Canadian aerospace, biotech, chemical, communications, IT, mining/metals, nuclear power, oil/gas and environmental technology industries are particularly vulnerable, and CSIS files already bulge with stores of illegal fax machine bugging and dumpster divers for corporate trash.

Canada is apparently a prime target, but Alistair Hensler, a former spycatcher with CSIS, and John Starnes, the first civilian chief of the RCMP Security Service before it became CSIS, both agree. The main stumbling block to establishing a Canadian foreign intelligence service to combat economic espionage is cultural. "It requires nerves of steel," Mr. Starnes said, and based on his previous experience of dealing with incidents in Canada which become highly politicized, he doesn't believe the federal government "has the guts to use" such a service because of domestic politics.

9. "DIGGING UP THE DIRT ON TORONTO'S OBSESSION WITH MONEY AND POWER"

This is a very entertaining and thought-provoking essay by Michael Posner, writing from the perspective of someone in the year 4245, looking back at Toronto. Mr. Posner's archaeologist finds bank building temples at the city's cardinal points, huge stadia for public entertainment, and lots of evidence of videos, movies and other electronic games — thereby deducing the importance our society places on money, power and amusement. The archaeologist finds very little evidence of spiritual values, except in the gods that are worshipped through athletics, mass entertainment, and science and technology.

"I'm sure in their day these people thought they belonged to one of the most advanced civilizations in history," the archaeologist says. "It's only from this vantage point that we can understand how unformed, superstitious and ignorant they really were."

10. "BENEFITS: WHAT ABOUT NO-SEX PARTNERS"

Why should employment benefits be limited to sexual partners, whether of the same or a different gender? This article talks about the law passed in Hawaii last year, the Bill of Reciprocal Beneficiaries, and asks why it can't happen here. It acknowledges a broader definition of family and affiliation, and allows an employee to name one other adult — maybe a spouse or sexual partner, but maybe a sister, nephew or friend — to be covered by his/her benefits.

**11. "BLACK BEAUTY: AFRICAN PAGEANT FOR A SKINNY
SUPERMODEL PROVOKES CRY FROM BIG-BUTT BACKERS"**

In a continent-wide search for black supermodels, the judges (African and non-African) opted for very dark skin, but very thin and non-negroid features. In the controversy that has erupted — with Africans on both sides of the dispute — what was at stake was the posited "globalization of western beauty standards" at the same time differences in skin hue were valued.

Local recognition of difference in a globalized world?

12. "FOOD, DEADLY FOOD"

This review by a University of Guelph food science scholar of a new book indicates worldwide growing concerns, so to speak, about food safety and quality. The review and/or the book examines the rise of food safety problems, the benefits and disadvantages of technological changes to agriculture, and the gap between sophistication in production and delivery (the reviewer says it pays to remember what can happen to any food when it is handled by a poorly trained minimum-wage worker).

Is the answer smaller and more localized food production to limit safety concerns, or better standards and regulation while still providing the cheap food that technology has delivered? The author and reviewer disagree, but the debate is fundamental to this and other fields.

13. "DRAWN TO THE DARK SIDE"

The day in the sun for all those Pink Floyd addicts! This week marked the 25th anniversary of the issuance of "Dark Side of the Moon." It was never #1 on the charts in Britain, and was #1 for only one week on Billboard's North American charts, but it was on the "Top 200" charts for more than 14 years in both countries, and still sells more than a million copies a year around the world. It only ever won one award — a Grammy for Best Engineered Album in 1973. But, as one interviewee states, "It is the musical equivalent of a Chicago Bulls t-shirt" — transnational and transgenerational in its appeal. Tracks from the album were the first rock music played by astronauts, and its distinctive prism and rainbow shaft of light on a black background from the album cover is instantly recognizable.

Why did and does it have such appeal? Nice music, yes — but the devotees cite the lyrics. They deal with death, money, insanity and time — universal and enduring concerns. There is a move afoot, by the way, to persuade the band to reunite for a millennium performance of the album at the Pyramids in Egypt.

• TWO CARTOONS

Let me draw this limited — and I do emphasize LIMITED — clippings review to an end with two cartoons reprinted in the Saturday paper. If you didn't see them, they'll give you a chuckle and, yes, they are related to this speech ...

The first picks up on the short-lived fame of the mega-asteroid story. Here it is, hurtling toward Earth, in 2028, and the newscast among the mortals down below reads "And here's the top news story for Oct. 26, 2028 ... "Will Quebec finally separate?"

The other cartoon is from my old favourite, Raeside, in the Victoria Times-Colonist, and focuses on the doctor's strike in B.C. The captions read, "This closure of doctors' offices is really inconveniencing me!" one punter says to his pal, who asks, "You're trying to get a doctor's appointment?" "No," he replies, "a tee-off time."

So... where are we headed in learning for the 21st century?

Now, what does all of that have to do with learning in the 21st century, and changing roles and challenges? Let me go back briefly to an overhead slide some of you are old enough to remember. I used it in a speech I gave in 1992 which several folks were kind enough to reprint and distribute in various publications.

It talks about how the nature of knowledge changed during the 20th century, and lots of writers and gurus have written about this since in much more entertaining and incisive ways. But I think it pays us to go back for a few minutes and review these categories — because unless we can accept that the fundamental nature of learning has changed, nothing else follows. I know I am "preaching to the converted" here, but the "default" position in our thinking is so strong, that it's important ...

Now, let me take you quickly to the themes and tensions of those newspaper headlines we saw — which, I emphasize again, could be replicated in nature almost any day of the week:

localization (diversity) ----- globalization (homogeneity, hegemony)
individual ----- collective
private ----- public (governance)
wealth creation ----- social equity
mass production ----- localized growth
urban ----- rural
technology for its own sake ----- technology only for “ethical” use

What makes these tensions so interesting is their limitations. They each reflect only a partial reality, and overlying it all are the continuing and enduring human themes: Why am I here? Does my life have meaning? To what extent am I responsible for meeting the needs of strangers?

What also makes them interesting are their intersections — that undefined space where meaning is created, individually and collectively. And that is where, as professional educators and human learners we can make a difference.

There is no doubt that our professional world will change in the years ahead:

- ▲ *We will have to learn to use more technology to help meet the needs of different learners and different learning contexts.*
- ▲ *Fewer of us will have permanent or tenured jobs in large educational bureaucracies.*
- ▲ *Whether in K-12 or the adult world, learning will need to be more individually tailored, more problem-centred, more modularized, more just-in-time.*
- ▲ *All of us will have to work with more partners in doing what we do — not just parents and employers and other government systems, but community partners and educators from other professional traditions and parts of the sector.*
- ▲ *Our professional world will be more competitive, public-private, public-public, and public-supplier competition. Even in K-12, where a public system may — that is, MAY — be*

preserved, there is both formal and informal competition: private schools, private and non-profit tutoring and enhancement services, television, the Internet, CD-ROMS, and so on.

- ▲ *We will all have to be clearer — as individual professionals and organizational entities — about what it is we do well.*
- ▲ *All of us — public and private providers of education/ training — will be challenged in our governance (as will the wider society be). “Triple bottom line” issues will face private providers, as well as the same demands for accountability being faced by public providers. Public providers will need to give up some of their tight professional control of content and delivery to meet learner needs and social accountability requirements.*

On the whole, I think most of this will benefit learners and communities, and make us better professionals. But there will be individual and organizational casualties for those who are less professionally competent or adaptable, and for those with fewer resources to cushion their free-fall in a changing educational marketplace. Some of us have less time than others to change because we simply aren't as well resourced, financially.

What are the challenges that should be on our own “top five” list? You may have your own, but here are mine:

- ▲ *We need to THINK, and to create space and time for thinking individually and collectively, and that is certainly getting less possible to do. I don't mean more conferences, God forbid — but genuine think-tanks of creative individuals, well connected to decision-makers, who can be advising on how to address some of the pitfalls on the road ahead.*
- ▲ *Who, for example, is thinking creatively about governance? The old ways clearly don't work anymore, in the education sector, as well as in others. But where is the articulate and rational thought about options and strategies for what should replace the old? Who is briefing and training leaders to facilitate those transitions? And, with all due respect, this is not the job of governments to create those options. They can assist the process, but not drive it.*

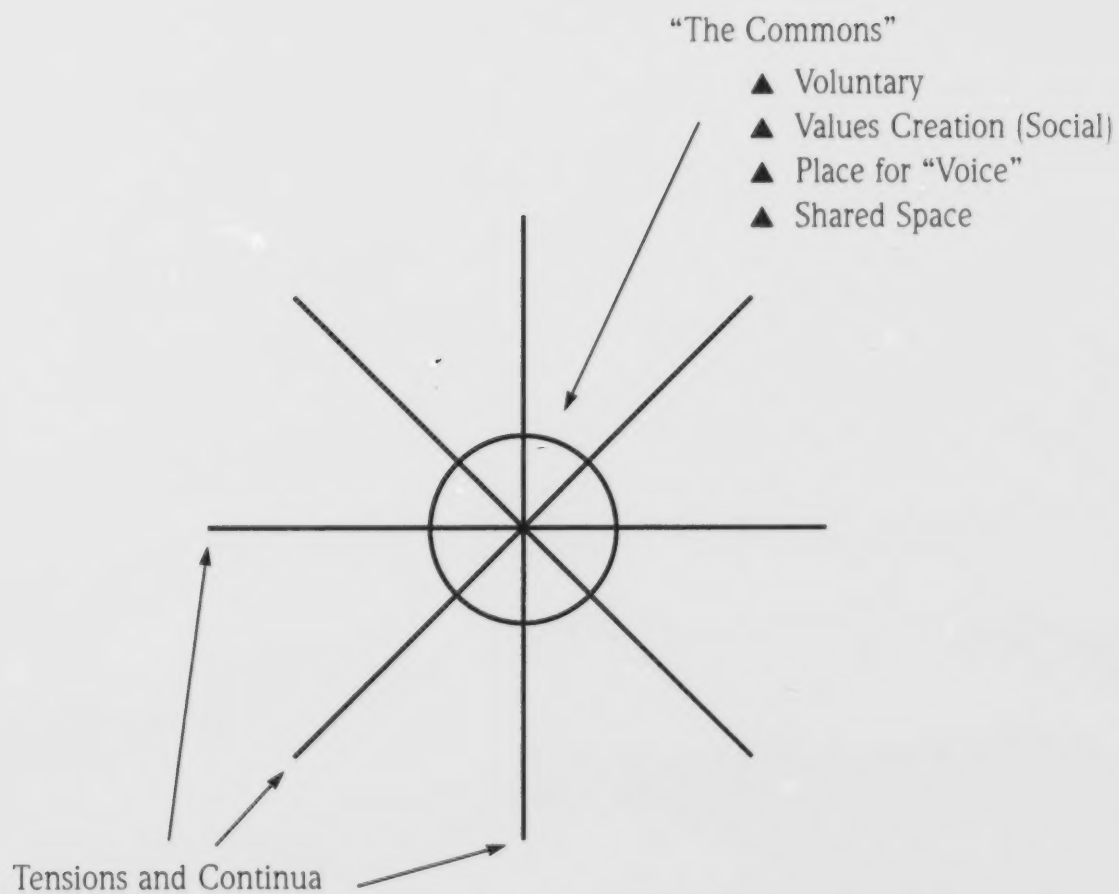
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- ▲ *How can we fast-track professional development for educators? They need the tools for change and flexibility, and they need easy and useful access to the latest in learning research, including brain research. How can we address the future effectively if we don't understand what's happening and if we can't use the tools that are available to other sectors trying to manage their own growth and survival?*
 - ▲ *How can government programs adapt to new delivery and governance experiments? These don't fit old legislative or policy frameworks, which were designed to assist individuals for specific reasons and stated periods of time. Now, we need to find program parameters that create ongoing mediating infrastructure in communities. And you can't do that with one-year project funding, and stifling program restrictions. There are other ways, including other ways of achieving public accountability, but that means the jobs of public servants also must change. I know I could write a book about the current frustrations at the community level about the disconnection between old public-sector thinking and new community realities, and I'm sure most of you could, too.*
 - ▲ *And who is thinking about how we bridge the gap between local and global in community capacity-building? Who's doing the sensitivity analysis on what rural or remote communities need, compared to urban communities? Or what individuals need versus what organizations or collectives need in order to learn and sustain themselves? Or what larger private sector business needs generally to thrive, versus what ultra small enterprises require? One of our challenges in Canada is the bipolar nature of population and economy along rural-urban and large-small enterprise lines. One public policy NEVER fits all.*

It's time to draw this to a close, and I sincerely hope that I haven't answered many questions for you! I do hope that I've given you a few new templates or "frames" for thinking about the issues. For your homework, may I recommend Esther Dyson's new book, *Release 2.0*, published by Broadway Books (I bought my copy at the Ottawa Airport bookshop). I haven't used a lot of

her ideas today, but they are great for taking you to the next steps and engaging in conversation in your communities.

Most importantly, today I hope I have encouraged you to want to use that wonderful entity, the human brain and spirit, to truly work with these issues as we move forward together in a very connected, if often disparate, world.

Thank you.



The Creation of Collective Space

Present and Future Tensions

localization (diversity) - - - globalization (homogeneity, hegemony)

individual - - - collective

private - - - public (governance)

wealth creation - - - social equity

mass production - - - localized growth

urban - - - rural

technology for its own sake - - technology only for "ethical" use

Appendix C

CLN Forum Wrap-up

Presented by Lucille Pacey
Vice-President
Innovations
Open Learning Agency

It's really my privilege to be able to take on this task. I am a little bit intimidated by this group. You are a remarkable group. You're a fountain of information, ideas — an incredibly powerful group to be able to try and follow to draw some common threads, but I'll do my best.

I wanted to start with a quote from Plutarch, he said "the mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be ignited." And I must admit that over the last two days I have seen sparks, I have seen fires, I have seen ideas being shared, I have seen ideas being challenged, and I've seen a lot of learning that has been going on.

So I have to commend you for your perseverance, your wonderful willingness to work with a diverse group of people, and more importantly, to be so outspoken. I think it's only in these kinds of circumstances that we can learn from each other and really, really build a common sense of understanding. So I see the beginning behaviour modeling that we want to take back to our various communities.

I said I was a bit intimidated and I want to take the time now to acknowledge that each one of you was the author of my comments. So what I am going to feed back to you are not my ideas. There are a couple of mine that are in here that some of you may recognize. But by and large, my role was to listen, to consolidate, to sift through the ideas and to draw the threads and the themes together to affirm, to acknowledge and also celebrate the results of your efforts of the last two days.

And it is a celebration. I think everyone deserves a reward for still being here. I know people are tired, people have other plans, but you're sitting here and you are still committed to continuing the process.

Let me say a bit about myself before I begin. I think I need to admit a bias. I consider myself to be a passionate educator, so I do come to this forum from the world of learning, but I also have a very positive bias towards the power and the appropriateness of the applications of communication and information technologies. So, in the course of my comments, you will soon see that I continue to draw the power of technology into where I think our agenda is moving in the future.

I'm not going to spend anytime at all on the definitional issues. There was a lot of discussion in the hallways in the home groups about the definition of community and the definition of networks. I felt that there was a general consensus being reached that each one of you in your own right knew how to define your community and knew what that meant to you and the work you were doing.

I'm also not going to spend any time on the definition of learning and learning models. Jackie Thayer Scott did a very effective job in outlining the existing learning paradigm and what she saw to be the new paradigm of learning. Some of that may resonate more effectively with some of you and some of you may see that as something to strive towards.

But I did think it was important to spend some time talking about what I heard as shared values. I heard words like community-driven, learner-centred, participatory and collaborative, income-generating and, in fact, Sue introduced us to the four "I"s which include inclusion, independence, initiative and income.

I heard things like future-oriented, sustaining and sustainability, assuming responsibility for what we were doing, and I heard a lot of discussion around the dignity of the individual and respect for the individual.

And this morning I was triggered by Louise's statements to prompt me to reinforce the whole aspect of research development. I think there is the pervasiveness of understanding that the work we take forward with us is based on the lessons of today and yesterday and we need to do that within a research-dependent society.

So if the goal is to create community-driven initiatives that lead to sustained social and economic prosperity, where continuous lifelong learning and technologies are contributors to the success of this, what would success look like for us and how can we facilitate and support this?

This really leads back to Steven's agenda, and that is, how do we create a tool box that will be helpful to individuals and communities?

I framed my comments in five thematic areas and they are:

- ▲ *community-based leadership;*
- ▲ *learner-centred communities;*
- ▲ *informed society;*
- ▲ *effective bridging strategies;*
- ▲ *recognition and celebration.*

I've tried to select a representative sample of the comments that I've heard. There are many more things that I could say, but I also know that the essence and the elements of what you've been discussing will come back to you through my comments.

The first theme is that of community-based leadership. I think if we were successful in moving ahead in community-based leadership, we would ensure that we had developed local expertise and local capacity to allow the community to chart its own course. What does that mean? It probably means that we've engaged in training and education that allows communities to vision, allows them to plan and encourages them to organize themselves.

It would probably mean that these same groups would understand the dynamics of group behaviour. They would have the skills to manage change and so we need to find ways in helping them understand that. They would have effective decision-making processes.

And we would see that they had built and were supporting the third sector, "Volunteerism," in their communities. Technology support systems, like collaborative planning tools, participatory communication tools and easy-to-use search engines are available and in place. Probably the most important learning that would have occurred in community-based leadership would be the ability to differentiate between strategy and tactic.

I want to take a little aside and give you an example of what that might look like, but I'm not going to use an example from this group. I think it may be a little dangerous. I'm the chair of a small non-profit board called "Art Starts in School." Our mandate is to introduce art and artists into the mainstream curriculum, working with teachers, learners and artists. One of the ways

that we do that, or a tactic that we use, is to organize an annual activity that brings together artists, teachers and students to allow them to see the skills of the artists.

Many of the members of our board developed an incredibly strong ownership to this annual event. It's called "Art Scar," — nice name — and they were beginning to put all of their energy into planning this annual event. It took a long time for us to work through the process to help them understand that the event was a tactic that we were using and that in one, two or three years down the road, that may not be an appropriate tactic any longer for all sorts of reasons.

They understand that now, but it was a very difficult thing for them to let go and say, yes, perhaps there will be other ways for us to make those linkages and to create those bridges. So I encourage you to think about that in the context of where you're going with your long-term plans. Be very clear between your strategic direction and the tactics that you use to get there.

The second category is this whole area of learner-centred communities, and the diversity in this group is remarkable.

We have people here who work in formal learning environments and we have people here who are very committed to non-formal learning and continuous learning. It was interesting for me to listen to people talk about learner-centred communities from their various perspectives. But if we do have learner-centred communities, then I think what we would have achieved was empowering individuals to shape their learning; including content and process.

What that will look like to many of us, and I include myself in that mix, is a shift from a supply driven to a demand driven model. We're going to have to find new ways of delivering learning, we're going to have to find new forms of learning and new areas of content and we're going to have to design new ways of developing content. We're going to have to be more relevant.

There was a lot of discussion over the last two days about what does relevancy mean to the individuals that we're working with in communities. That likely means beginning where the learner is by understanding the learner profile.

Tools to help us gather that data and then to appropriately match the technology to the learner level will be a challenge that we all face.

And, of course, flexibility, will have to be seen in access and process.

This morning Steven spoke to you about technologies and made a very important point that I would like to stress. My sense is that a monotechnology or a single technology solution will not work in our country nor will it work in some communities. There were examples that we heard of people using multiple forms of technology and looking towards the world of multimedia. But one of the challenges that we have is not to allow ourselves to believe that we all need to move at the same pace towards the same use of the same technology.

So putting technology into the hands of the learner at the level that the learner is at and applying it in such a way that it's transparent to the learner will be a challenge that we are all going to meet.

I want to spend a bit of time on discussing technologies and how we are going to be using them. We talk about technology as a tool or set of tools and as a delivery strategy. Communications technologies provide us with a distribution system and we are all very concerned about creating these distribution networks.

We have multiple networks that are being created some of which talk to each other and others which do not. That's one part of the technology agenda. The other part of the technology agenda is really technology to help us develop our critical thinking skills, our planning skills and our collaborative learning skills. So we need to think about the technologies in two ways.

There was a lot of discussion around the requirement of ethical frameworks for effective use of technology and I noted that is a recommendation for the tool box. People are beginning to believe that we have to pay some attention to creating that ethical framework. As a conclusion to this area of learner-centred environments, I also think that many of us have been working on the creation of tools for managing the learning process as well as the creation of tools for recording achievement in learners. Diagnostic learning tools and adaptive technologies to allow for collaborative content development will all be part of our future. And of course part and parcel of that, is the need for

an ongoing commitment to professional development for teachers, facilitators, both in process and in the use of the technology.

The third category within the framework is that of an informed civic society. At our lunch yesterday, we were introduced to the triple bottom line model which included not only an economic argument, but an environmental concern argument and a social equity argument.

If we are truly going to create community-based or community-centred initiatives, we have to pay attention to finding ways in which we can create the informed and fully participative society that not only understands its rights in a democracy but also understands its responsibilities in a democracy.

Now, this is where you get my little advertisement free of charge. I think that needs to include media and sound bite literacy as well as net literacy.

I think we are required to help people develop critical thinking skills so they can work their way through the maze of confusion. Understanding existing and new governance models will be important. As will participating in the third sector, not only do we need to build the third sector, but we need to create the commitment to participate in it.

Oftentimes I find that many of the disenfranchised have more of an appreciation of the third sector than many people like myself.

We need to help people to build that conviction and the confidence to "paint their buckets." Maybe we need to move to the front porches and to help create those common spaces. And we need to help people understand and know how to advocate for their own rights.

The fourth theme or fourth category that I identified in the work this weekend was the requirement for effective bridging strategies. If we're going to succeed, we need to pay attention to how we bridge so much of the work we're doing. And the bridging includes bridging from the individual to the collective, bridging from local to global. What are we doing that will impact or does it have a relevance to the global society and who's trying to address those issues?

Our community projects that are adding value to the community should contribute to community prosperity and should be recognized easily by the community.

There was a lot of discussion and encouragement this weekend about building small, real projects and working from small scale. The challenge will be to determine how we can replicate those small projects and extend them. If they're not sustainable in a small context, they will never be sustainable in a broader community; that requires planning, requires strategies for expansion and ongoing revenue streams.

And, of course, bridging strategies includes the whole issue of partnership creation. Again, a suggestion for the tool box was guides for creating partnerships? What are the criteria behind our partnerships? How do we set standards for partnerships? And how do we know when partnerships are not working? And how do we have the strength to move away from the partnerships?

Sometimes the hardest task for many of us is to say no to a partnership because oftentimes the partnership may appear to be bringing money within and we will put up with the partnership because we need the funding.

There are often good times to say no, this partnership does not do the things we need it to do.

We need to find ways to bridge from an incubation stage to full implementation and we need to have the courage of knowing how to let go. As we incubate activities, there comes the time when leaders in communities need to let those activities carry on in their own right.

And we need to know how to bridge national policy and programs to local initiatives. Hard questions need to be asked, such as: do the criteria work for us? Are we becoming slaves to the criteria? Do we have the flexibility within those programs to reflect the requirements and needs of the communities? And do the timelines work for us? Those are all things that groups of people will be able to change only if they pay attention to identifying what is not working.

Community networks need to be linked to other infrastructures and other networks that already exist. There were many, many examples over the

course of the two days where individuals spoke about knowing of other networks but never having gone down the street to speak to them. Go and talk to that other group that has a network in place, see if you can join one network to another and be able to build the infrastructure through the shared access to these networks.

The final category or theme that I identified was that of recognition and celebration and I need to give Perry the credit for this terminology. I was really struck at how we could turn accountability and strong measurement criteria to something that was more representative and much more relevant to us under the title of recognition and celebration. That doesn't mean that we don't have to pay attention to the hard data, it just means that we can reflect it differently in a language that works for us.

The creation of tangible, clearly described actions, examples of best practice, should be included in the tool box, to be shared widely.

The supportive hands-on projects: the challenge is to know how to facilitate the creation of those hands-on projects, knowing how to mentor them, foster them and then knowing how and when to let go.

Understanding the cycles and the impact of randomness. Jackie spoke of that yesterday. The impact of randomness oftentimes seems to have a disastrous impact on our activities, but we need to understand that that's part of our world and learn to live with the randomness.

Refocusing accountability measures to include not only economic gain, but also environmental benefits and social equity (the triple bottom line) is an opportunity for us.

And, of course, under recognition and celebration, the challenge of being able to appreciate and accept the trials and the tribulations of the work that's being done and to learn from our mistakes. I heard many people say, is it appropriate for us to publish our mistakes in the tool box. Do we want people to actually come forward and indicate this is what we did and it was a disaster? I would argue and say: Yes, it's very appropriate for us to learn from our mistakes. In fact, a true learning society does learn from its mistakes. So we shouldn't be ashamed of them, but we should be prepared to move forward from that position with humour, goodwill and some self-dignity.

The other aspect of recognition and celebration is being able to create the tangible and easily quantifiable rewards for participation. Most of us were intrigued with the learner credits card. A strategy which really in many respects seems very simple and yet seems to be so close to the learner and the community that you could understand how people would be able to accept and own the idea in a way which really fit the agendas of many people.

I have not said much about sustainability and funding and revenues, but there's been a lot of discussion about that. I want to challenge you with a statement: I believe that the work that we're doing now in grantsmanship and project funding in the long term will not guarantee sustainability to community-led activities.

And let me tell you why: At this point in time what we find is that many people are questioning whether or not they're fundraisers or programmers or community development specialists or if they're working towards the good of their activity.

The reality is, indeed, everyone is taking on a dual role and will continue to have to play that dual role if we're not smart enough to be able to create ongoing sustaining revenue streams. With grantsmanship and, project-based funding, you begin to become the mouse in the wheel; you're always working on someone else's timelines and agendas. The ability to sit back and find ways in which you can become part of the marketplace of your community and demonstrate the value that you contribute to the community will be a challenge, but will be necessary for the long run.

Finally, the knowledge to promote and market the results and the benefits of your projects. Don't be afraid to tell people what you're doing and don't be afraid to share your lessons your trials and your tribulations.

I have observed that Canadians are very shy about talking about the good things they're doing and they often are very quick to criticize what they've done. We can find all of the mistakes before we can find all of the benefits and the pluses.

We need to turn that around, we need to start sharing our dreams and sharing our visions; promoting those and communicating them to people without the fear that we may not meet all our high standards.

The agenda really is to use the technologies to test the technologies, to begin to amass the resources we have and share those resources effectively.

And from an economic perspective, not replicate or duplicate them if we don't have to. There is a lot of developed material available to us if we can find it and if we recognize that we don't always have to create our own. I think we can begin to re-purpose that content and we can begin to share the content.

I want to leave you with a quote from the Prince (1532): "There is nothing more difficult to carry out nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle than to initiate a new order of things."

I congratulate you for being prepared to tackle the initiation of a new order of things.

Thank you.

Appendix D

List of Participants

□ denotes a presenter,
☆ denotes a facilitator and
✱ denotes a conference organizer.

□ Harry Adam

Principal
J.W. Inglis Elementary School
Box 369, 2287 Shuswap Avenue
Lumby, BC V0E 2G0
Tel: (250) 547-9231
Fax: (250) 547-9469
Email: haadam@sd22.bc.ca

Bob Adams

Director
HRCC - London
Human Resources Development
Canada
451 Talbot Street
London, ON N6A 4S7
Tel: (519) 645-4013
Fax: (519) 645-4074

Alice Almond

Manager
Human Resources CTR
Human Resources Development
Canada
105 King Street
North Sydney, NS B2A 3S1
Tel: (902) 794-5877
Fax: (902) 794-5724

Debra Betty

Director
Northeast Region
Contact North/ *Contact Nord*
410 Falconbridge Road
Sudbury, ON P3A 4S4
Tel: (705) 671-2721
Fax: (705) 671-6289
Email: debra@mail.cnorth.edu.on.ca

Terry Anne Boyles

Vice-President
National Services
Association of Canadian
Community Colleges
1223 Michael Street North,
Suite 200
Ottawa, ON K1J 7T2
Tel: (613) 746-2853
Fax: (613) 746-6721
Email: taboyles@accc.ca

Liz Burge

Professor
Adult Education
University of New Brunswick
Box 4400
Fredericton, NB E3B 6E3
Tel: (506) 447-3037
Fax: (506) 453-3569
Email: burge@unb.ca

Barbara Case

President
Canadian Association for
Community Education
10 Empire Avenue
St. John's, NF A1C 3E4
Tel: (709) 739-6911
Fax: (709) 758-7126
Email: bcase@admin.north
atlantic.nf.ca

Elizabeth Casuga

Program & Development Officer
Women's Program
Status of Women Canada
360 Albert Street, Suite 700
Ottawa, ON K1A 1C3
Tel: (613) 947-8476
Fax: (613) 947-0761
Email: casugae@swc-cfc.gc.ca

✧ Jennifer Cawley Caruso

Coordinator
Business Development and
Market Research
Contact North/ *Contact Nord*
410 Falconbridge Road
Sudbury, ON P3A 4S4
Tel: (705) 525-7246
Fax: (705) 525-0136
Email: jen@mail.cnorth.edu.on.ca

Anna Classen

Certification Manager
Council for the Advancement of
Native Development Officers
10036 Jasper Avenue, Suite 240
Edmonton, AB T5J 2W2
Tel: (403) 990-0303
Fax: (403) 429-7487
Email: cando@ccinet.ab.ca

Heather Clemenson

Chief
Rural Analysis
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Rural Secretariat, AAFC
930 Carling Avenue, 4th Floor,
SJC
Ottawa, ON K1A 0C5
Tel: (613) 759-7106
Fax: (613) 759-7105
Email: clemenh@em.agr.ca

▣ Mary Ann Corbiere

Assistant Professor
Native Studies
University of Sudbury
Ramsey Lake Road
Sudbury, ON P3E 2C6
Tel: (705) 673-5661 ext. 226
Fax: (705) 673-4912

Aubrey Cormier

Directeur général
Société éducative de l'Île-du-
Prince-Édouard
48 Mill Road, Box. 159
Wellington, PE C0B 2E0
Tel: (902) 854-7275
Fax: (902) 854-3011
Email: aubrey@teleco.org

Carmelle d'Entremont

Manager
Adult Education Section
Department of Education &
Culture
2021 Brunswick Street
Halifax, NS B3J 2S9
Tel: (902) 424-5160
Fax: (902) 424-0666
Email: dentrect@gov.ns.ca

Tanya de Montigny

Regional TEC Centre Inc.
P.O. Box 550
Russell, MB R0J 1W0
Tel: (204) 773-4726
Fax: (204) 773-2134
Email: brc@mb.sympatico.ca

Jan Donio

Creative Head
Educational Programming and
Services
TV Ontario
2180 Yonge Street, Box 200,
Station Q
Toronto, ON M4T 2T1
Tel: (416) 484-2743
Fax: (416) 484-2709
Email: jan_donio@tvo.org

Donald Duprey

Managing Director
Educational Programming and
Services
TV Ontario
2180 Yonge Street, Box 200,
Station Q
Toronto, ON M4T 2T1
Tel: (416) 484-2652
Fax: (416) 484-4519
Email: don_duprey@tvo.org

Dorie Faulconer

President
Board of Directors
Independent Living Resource
Centre
1201 Jasper Drive, Suite B
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 6R2
Tel: (807) 345-6157
Fax: (807) 345-0266

Serge Galarneau

Administrateur
Travailleurs et Travailleuses
Potentiels du Saguenay Lac
St-Jean
2351 St-Dominique Street
Jonquiere, QC G7X 6L9
Tel: (418) 542-0365
Fax: (418) 542-4412

Genevieve Gallant

President-Elect
Association for Media and
Technology in Education in
Canada (AMTEC)
Spencer Hall, Memorial
University of Newfoundland
St. John's, NF A1C 5S7
Tel: (709) 737-3431
Fax: (709) 737-3458
Email: gallant@morgan.ucs.mun.ca

Ruby Gervais

Program Manager
Continuing Education
Laurentian University
Ramsey Lake Road
Sudbury, ON P3E 2C6
Tel: (705) 675-4819
Fax: (705) 675-4897
Email: rgervais@nickel.laurentian.ca

Heather Gordon

Coordinator
Sunshine Coast Women's
Resource Centre
5645 Wharf Street, Box 1443
Sechelt, BC V0N 3A0
Tel: (604) 885-4088
Fax: (604) 885-8556
Email: heather_gordon@
sunshine.net

 Eunice Grayson

Executive Director
The Learning Enrichment
Foundation
116 Industry Street
Toronto, ON M6M 4L8
Tel: (416) 760-2553
Fax: (416) 769-9912
Email: egrayson@lefca.org

Mike Gurstein

Associate Chair
Management of Technological
Change
Research & Development
University College of Cape Breton
P.O. Box 6300
Sydney, NS B1P 6L2
Tel: (902) 562-1369
Fax: (902) 562-0119
Email: mgurst@ccen.uccb.ns.ca

Jon Hall

Association Manager
Quandary Solutions
10335-61 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T6H 1K9
Tel: (403) 430-9494
Fax: (403) 438-4837
Email: jonhall@freenet.
edmonton.ab.ca

Carol Humphries

Executive Director
The Learning Link
#400, 10665 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5J 3S9
Tel: (403) 421-7141
Fax: (403) 421-7159
Email: carol@freenet.
edmonton.ab.ca

 Rick Hutchins

Consultant
Rick Hutchins Consulting
RR#3
Mouth of Keswick, NB E0H 1N0
Tel: (506) 363-4538
Fax: (506) 459-3634
Email: hutchins@nbnet.nb.ca

Maxim Jean-Louis

President & Chief Executive
Officer
Contact North/ *Contact Nord*
410 Falconbridge Road
Sudbury, ON P3A 4S4
Tel: (705) 671-2713
Fax: (705) 671-9605
Email: maxim@mail.cnorth.
edu.on.ca

 Don King

Director
Seniors' Education Centre
University of Regina
College Avenue & Cornwall Street
Regina, SK S4S 0A2
Tel: (306) 585-5806
Fax: (306) 585-5736
Email: don.king@uregina.ca

 Perry Kinkaide

Partner, Chair
Management Consulting
KPMG & CLC Society, St. Albert
10125-102 Street, #102 Grandin
Plaza
Edmonton, AB T5J 3V8
Tel: (403) 429-5860
Fax: (403) 429-5850
Email: pkinkaide@v-wave.com

 Beverley Kirby

Director
District School Board #4
Port au Port Community
Education Initiative Inc.
P.O. Box 5600
Stephenville, NF A2N 3P5
Tel: (709) 643-4891
Fax: (709) 643-9235
Email: bkirby@nf.sympatico.ca

 Doug Knight

Knight Research And Consulting
Services
11118 20th Avenue
Edmonton, AB T6J 5J4
Tel: (403) 437-6459
Fax: (403) 439-7145
Email: dknight@compusmart.ab.ca

 Stephen Loyd

Director
Office of Learning Technologies
15 Eddy Street, Ground Floor
Hull, QC K1A 0M5
Tel: (819) 953-0243
Fax: (819) 997-6777
Email: sloyd@ibm.net

Tony Mark

Program Manager
Research Services
Centre for Learning Technologies
Mount Allison University
10 Salem Street
Sackville, NB E4L 1B7
Tel: (506) 364-2675
Fax: (506) 364-2672
Email: tmark@mta.ca

May Maskow

President
Canadian Association for Distance
Education
CJRT Open College
150 Mutual Street
Toronto, ON M5B 2M1
Tel: (416) 595-0485
Fax: (416) 595-9602
Email: mmaskow@acs.ryerson.ca

 Sandy McAuley

Coordinator
Distance Learning Systems
Department of Education
Information Networks
Box 1320
Yellowknife, NWT X1A 2L9
Tel: (867) 873-7219
Fax: (867) 873-0107
Email: sandy_mcauley@
learnnet.nt.ca

 Craig McNaughton

Executive Director
Movement for Canadian Literacy
458 McLaren Street, 2nd Floor
Ottawa, ON K1R 5K6
Tel: (613) 563-2464
Fax: (613) 563-2504
Email: mcl@magi.com

Grayley McWatters

Program Co-ordinator
The Eden Project
Simcoe County Board of
Education
575 West Street S., Unit 15
Orillia, ON L3V 7H5
Tel: (705) 325-9279
Fax: (705) 325-3114
Email: luke@eden.scbe.on.ca

Betty Mitchell

Director
Innovations
Open Learning Agency
4355 Mathissi Place
Burnaby, BC V5G 4S8
Tel: (604) 431-3080
Fax: (604) 431-3388
Email: bettym@ola.bc.ca

Wendy Newman

CEO
Brantford Public Library
173 Colborne Street
Brantford, ON N3T 2G8
Tel: (519) 756-2223
Fax: (519) 756-4979
Email: wnewman@brantford.
library.on.ca

 Yves Otis

Agent de recherche
CDEACF
1265 Berri Street, Suite 340
Montreal, QC H2L 4X4
Tel: (514) 844-8428
Fax: (514) 844-1598
Email: talpha@cam.org

 Lucille Pacey

Vice-President
Innovations
Open Learning Agency
4355 Mathissi Place
Burnaby, BC V5G 4S8
Tel: (604) 431-3000
Fax: (604) 431-3391
Email: lucillep@ola.bc.ca

Josée Paquet

Conseillère
Conseil d'administration
Educentre
1575, 7th Avenue West
Vancouver, BC V6J 1S1
Tel: (604) 736-6112
Fax: (604) 732-5962
Email: admin@educacentre.ca

Larry Peckford

HRCC Manager
Human Resources Development
Canada
Box 690
Stephenville, NF A2N 3B5
Tel: (709) 643-8106
Fax: (709) 643-3766
Email: larry.peckford@hrdc-
drhc.gc.ca

 Sara Peltier

Education Director
Wikwemikong Board of Education
19A Complex Drive
Wikwemikong, ON P0P 2J0
Tel: (705) 859-3122
Fax: (705) 859-3851

Linda Pemik

Community Adult Educator
Nunavut Arctic College
Bag 002
Rankin Inlet, NT X0C 0G0
Tel: (867) 645-2917
Fax: (867) 645-2198
Email: lpemik@artic.ca

Theresa Pittman

Partnership Facilitator
Vista School District
P.O. Box 2001
Clareville, NF A0E 1J0
Tel: (709) 466-3401 ext. 243
Fax: (709) 466-3987
Email: t.pittman@thetzone.net

Scarlet Pollock

Coordinator
Women'space
RR#1
Scotsburn, NS B0K 1R0
Tel: (902) 351-2444
Fax: (902) 351-2283
Email: diamond@womenspace.ca

Chantal Pollock

Directrice
Appui pédagogique
Collège Boréal
21 Lasalle Boulevard
Sudbury, ON P3A 6B1
Tel: (705) 560-6673
Fax: (705) 521-6013
Email: chantal@academe.
boreale.on.ca

 Sue Rickards

Selby Associates
RR#1
Mouth of Keswick, NB E0H 1N0
Tel: (506) 363-2969
Fax: (506) 363-5176
Email: selbyinc@nb.sympatico.ca

 David Roberts

Director
Information Highway
Connect NB Branché
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1
Tel: (506) 444-4703
Fax: (506) 444-4058
Email: droberts@nbnet.nb.ca

Carol Rock
Executive Director
Women and Rural Economic
Development
379 Huron Street
Stratford, ON N0K 1P0
Tel: (519) 273-5017
Fax: (519) 273-4826
Email: wred@sentex.net

Anne Ryan
Director
Faculty of Education
CSpace
Rm 311, Marshall d'Avary Hall
University of New Brunswick
Fredericton, NB E3B 6E3
Tel: (506) 447-3150
Fax: (506) 447-3151
Email: ryana@unb.ca

Janis Sall
Coordinator
Community Futures
Development
Corporation of Central Island
271 Pine Street
Nanaimo, BC V9R 2B7
Tel: (250) 753-6414
Fax: (250) 753-0722
Email: jsall@nanaimo.ark.com

Louise Sauvé
Présidente
Télé-université - Savie
2600 Laurier Boulevard
7th Floor, P.O. Box 10700
Ste-Foy, QC G1V 4V9
Tel: (418) 657-2747
Fax: (418) 657-2094
Email: lsauve@teluq.quebec.ca

Jacquelyn Thayer Scott
President
University College of Cape Breton
P.O. Box 5300
Sydney, NS B1P 6L2
Tel: (902) 563-1333
Fax: (902) 562-0273
Email: jscott@uccb.ns.ca

Karen Setter
Project Manager
Ontario Network of Employment
Skills Training Projects
(ONESTEP)
517 Wellington Street West,
Suite 210
Toronto, ON M5V 1G1
Tel: (416) 591-7151
Fax: (416) 591-9126
Email: info@onestep.on.ca

Michele Sherren

Senior Writer
Staigh & Green Communications
360 Bronson Avenue
Ottawa, ON K1R 6J3
Tel: (613) 235-4600
Fax: (613) 235-4413
Email: sgcomm@istar.ca

Claude Shink

Directeur associé
Service francsaskois d'éducation
des adultes
Sac 20, Gravelbourg
Gravelbourg, SK S0H 1X0
Tel: (306) 648-3129
Fax: (306) 648-2295
Email: sfea.cshink@sympatico.ca

 Linda Shohet

Director
The Centre for Literacy
3040 Sherbrooke Street West
Montreal, QC H3Z 1A4
Tel: (514) 931-8731 ext. 1491
Fax: (514) 931-5181
Email:
lshohet@dawsoncollege.qc.ca

Scott Shortliffe

Program Officer
Canadian Heritage
Canadian Studies Program
15 Eddy Street, 7th Floor
Hull, QC K1A 0M5
Tel: (819) 994-5157
Fax: (819) 994-1314
Email: scott_shortliffe@pch.gc.ca

Cate Sills

Community Literacy
Development Facilitator
NWT Literary Council
Box 761
3rd Floor, Northern United Place
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N6
Tel: (867) 669-9734
Fax: (867) 873-4129
Email: cate_sills@learnnet.nt

Angie Stewart

Community Economic
Development
Consultant
Tribal Resources Investment Corp.
217 West Third Avenue
Prince Rupert, BC V8J 1L2
Tel: (250) 624-3535
Fax: (250) 624-3883
Email: tricorp@kaien.com

Jeff Tapley

Director
HRDC Regional Office, HRCC
Miramichi
150 Pleasant Street
P.O. Box 1030
Miramichi, NB E1V 3V5
Tel: (506) 627-2004
Fax: (506) 627-2049

Wayne Tosh

Director
Community Access Program
Industry Canada
155 Queen Street
7th Floor, Room 704
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H5
Tel: (613) 993-5544
Fax: (613) 941-3857
Email: tosh.wayne@ic.gc.ca

Michael Williamson

Network Specialist
Information Technology
National Library of Canada
25 Eddy Street
Hull, QC K1A 0M5
Tel: (819) 994-6997
Fax: (819) 994-6835
Email: michael.williamson@
nlc-bnc.ca

Dean Wood

Vice-President
Instruction
Keyano College
8115 Franklin Avenue
Fort McMurray, AB T9H 2H7
Tel: (403) 791-4851
Fax: (403) 791-4841
Email: dean.wood@keyanoc.ab.ca

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***First Pan-Canadian
Forum on Community
Learning Networks
A Discussion Guide***

Office of Learning Technologies
Bureau des technologies d'apprentissage



Human Resources
Development Canada

Développement des
ressources humaines Canada



Contact Nord

Contact North

Access Through Innovation

This discussion guide was prepared for the Office of Learning Technologies and Contact North/Contact Nord by Doug Knight, PhD, Contact North/Contact Nord Research Associate, to be used at the co-sponsored Community Learning Network Forum (March 27-29, 1998).

The opinions expressed in this guide are those of the consultants, and are not necessarily those of the Office of Learning Technologies, Human Resources Development Canada or Contact North/Contact Nord.

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A social, economic and cultural revolution is now transforming the world. A new game is starting, and the older rules no longer apply. It is imperative that Canada move quickly to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities of this new age.

Preparing Canada for a Digital World, 1997

If Canada is to develop as a society built on knowledge, community learning networks will have a critical role to play. As a participant of the First Pan-Canadian Forum on Community Learning Networks, you are involved in a challenge that will help shape Canada's future as a knowledge-based society and determine its status as a world leader.

A "knowledge-based society" requires citizens to strive to learn new things and create new ways of working and learning. These citizens add value, through their knowledge base, to products, processes, and services. "Knowledge-based societies," "information-based economies," or "digital economies" — whatever term we use to describe this emerging world order — depends on people and organizations at the community level to create conditions that support change and learning.

The information and communication technologies needed to support a knowledge-based society are becoming more and more complex and pervasive. There is a danger that the "haves" and "have-nots" could quickly become more separated. Developing countries, wishing to accelerate their economic and social growth, are investing heavily in these technological infrastructures. Those countries that do not or cannot invest will continue to struggle economically. Within developed countries such as Canada, differential access to these technologies could create a problem of economic and social disparity.

Organizations — from public educational institutions to private-sector endeavours and community-based organizations — are now being examined to determine whether their structures and designs can meet the emerging demands of lifelong learners. Public educational institutions are quickly developing programs that can be accessed by anyone, anywhere, at anytime. The private sector continues to invest in training and retraining, and in the development of workplace models of learning. Community-based organizations such as:

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- ▲ *the Lumby Community Internet Access in British Columbia*
 - ▲ *the North Sydney Entrepreneurial Centre in Nova Scotia*
 - ▲ *the Learning Circles of Edmonton's Learning Link*
 - ▲ *the Port au Port Community Education Initiative in Newfoundland and*
 - ▲ *the Lanark Communications Network in Eastern Ontario*¹

reach out to learners, and potential learners, to provide access in both urban and remote areas of the country. The new focus across Canada is to bring learning to the learner, provide service as well as credits, and be accountable to the learner as well as to the public.

There are many individuals, however, who cannot or will not avail themselves of the learning opportunities that currently exist. Our traditional educational institutions are not always well equipped to provide opportunities for those who do not wish to be, know how to be, or believe they cannot be, lifelong learners. Community learning networks, or similar organizations by another name, have been constituted across Canada — and indeed across the world — to build bridges for those who need assistance in accessing formal and informal learning opportunities. The notion of community development has taken on a new dimension, as educational technologies bring the world to one's doorstep.

Community Learning Networks

Community learning networks (CLNs) are not yet well established in all parts of Canada. A report prepared for the Office of Learning Technologies (OLT), entitled *Models of Community Learning Networks in Canada*, has provided an initial overview of some CLN initiatives in Canada. CLNs can best be described as emerging, hybrid, complex, and well poised to contribute to realizing a society based on knowledge.

¹ These case studies can be found in *Models of Community Learning Networks in Canada*, a report prepared for the Office of Learning Technologies, 1997

There is no one model of community learning networks in Canada. The following examples illustrate the breadth of such organizations.² Those marked with an asterisk (*) are financially supported by the OLT (see *Approved Contribution Projects*).

Mid-Island Inter-Agency Group (Nanaimo, BC)

The Mid-Island Inter-Agency Group is an association of institutions, organizations and companies that offer training, career counseling and career education to clients in the area. Its mission is to "facilitate communication and positive working relationships with funding agencies and among member agencies to enhance community service."

On-Line, In Business, At Home* (Burnaby, BC)

On-Line, In Business, At Home is an action research project to assess the needs of adult learners with physical disabilities. It will also field test the applicability and effectiveness of the Internet and videoconferencing as a means of providing learning activities to physically disabled adults in their homes, work environments and learning centres. This project is sponsored by the Open Learning Agency, in partnership with the Neil Squire Foundation, the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities, the BC Paraplegic Association, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, the Arthritis Society, Special Education and Technology BC, CRANE Resource Centre, UBC, and OLA Disabilities Services.

St. Albert Continuous Learning Community (St. Albert, AB)

The St. Albert Continuous Learning Community has evolved from the initial discussions of a small group on continuous learning and community barriers to a network of volunteers whose mission is to "encourage people to become knowledgeable and to realize sustained prosperity through continuous learning." This organization has developed a number of partnerships, including TELUS (the provincial telecommunications system), Athabasca University, VICOM Multimedia, ACCESS — The Education Station, the City of St. Albert, the Congress Board of Alberta, and the Quality Council of Alberta.

² Source: *Models of Community Learning Networks in Canada*, 1997

Community Economic Development Training (Northern Saskatchewan)

Community Economic Development Training (CED) is a training project involving residents from seven northern communities; those involved will participate in an Internet-delivered program that has been designed to build capacity in community economic development. The partners in this initiative include the Northeast Economic Development Association, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, Cumberland House Cree Nation, New Careers Corporation, Future Skills Program, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, SaskTel, the Village of Sandy Bay, the Village of Pelican Narrows, and the Town of Cumberland House.

Women and Rural Economic Development Network (Ontario)

The Women and Rural Economic Development Network is a provincial not-for-profit organization. Its mission is to "promote the participation of women in Ontario's rural economic development by making available business and skills training and networking opportunities." The organization is governed by a board of directors drawn from among its membership constituency of rural women. Funding comes from the federal and provincial governments, community-based organizations, institutions, and business.

Learning Enrichment Foundation (Toronto, ON)

The Learning Enrichment Foundation is a non-profit, charitable agency for community economic and social development. It operates a range of programs for unemployed people, immigrants and students in need of ESL. Programs include literacy and numeracy courses, and skills training in food services, construction, child care, computers and business.

Contact North/ *Contact Nord* (Northern Ontario)

Contact North/ *Contact Nord* is a not-for-profit corporation and the largest distance education network in Canada. Its mandate is to help increase and improve access for Northern Ontario residents — particularly those in remote communities, Francophones and Aboriginal peoples — to formal and informal education and training opportunities. It presently serves 150 community sites and has registrations exceeding 11,000 students in more than 650 courses from secondary schools, colleges and universities. In collaboration with public- and private-sector partners, Contact North/ *Contact Nord* is supporting innovation in learning and is actively

seeking to respond to the needs of Northern Ontario residents to conduct meetings at a distance, to communicate with clients and to deliver staff training. (Web site: <http://www.cnorth.edu.on.ca>)

Just-In-Time Learning and Information Network* (Toronto, ON)

The Ontario Network of Employment Skills Training Projects (ONESTeP), a non-profit provincial umbrella organization, is designing a learning network that will use computer technologies to link organizations, clients, businesses and the public. The Just-In-Time Learning and Information Network project's purpose is to identify, promote, animate and facilitate the use of information technology to capture best practices from across Canada; to enhance information-sharing about these practices; to monitor and evaluate emerging technologies related to community-based training; and to provide professional development opportunities for practitioners.

Janus Project: Promises and Prospects of Technology and Women's Learning* (Toronto, ON)

The Janus Project was conducted to raise awareness about the challenges and opportunities that learning technologies present for women. A discussion paper has been published that outlines trends, issues and areas for further exploration.

Multimedia Training Observatory* (Montreal, QC)

The Multimedia Training Observatory's main objective is to develop linkages between various stakeholders, such as businesses, government, learning institutes and the public. A Web site is being constructed to act as a clearing-house of information for users interested in development tools and learning models using multimedia learning technologies.

Iqalaaq, Rankin Inlet Community Access Centre (NWT)

The mission of the Rankin Inlet Community Access Centre, or Iqalaaq, is to "introduce the computer as an open window to our future, to be accessible to all so that our community learns together." One of its objectives is to ensure that all community members have access to current computer technology and the Internet, regardless of skills or resources. This project is sponsored by both private- and public-sector agencies.

Testing a Learning Model for People with Disabilities* (Lunenburg, NS)

Sponsored by the Assistive Technology Centre (ATC) in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, this project will test a model for delivering basic skills training, using adapted computer technologies, to adults with disabilities living in rural areas. ATC is working in partnership with the Acadia University Education Department, the Employment Outreach Office in Bridgewater, the Lunenburg HS Community Computer Lab, the Mahone Bay Computer Network Society, the Community Learning Initiative in Bridgewater, and the provincial Disabled Persons Commission.

Strategic Technology Application for Rural Telework (START)*
(Clareville, NFLD)

The START project is developing computer-based learning models to assist adult learners in rural communities who have post-secondary skills, but require training and technology access in order to learn and work at a distance. The Eastern College of Applied Arts, Technology and Continuing Education is the sponsor.

Conceptual Foundations

The limited literature available on CLNs is scattered across a variety of sources, conceptually inconsistent, and lacks a common definition, model, goal or purpose. There is an underpinning of community development, but the inclusion of and focus on lifelong learning, public and private partnerships, institutional collaboration, and telecommunications infrastructures appear to be creating a new concept. There are many configurations and types of organizations, each as different as the communities they serve. And, there are somewhat different goals for these various organizations — from broad community development goals to the improvement of access to learning opportunities.

The authors of the OLT report have provided the following definition, for working purposes, of community learning networks:

... community-controlled structures and systems aimed at furthering community development and enhancing the lives of their constituencies by supporting and encouraging lifelong learning.

To be relevant, community learning networks must operate within the confines of a geographically circumscribed community, defined also as a community of interest.

Technologies, including telecommunications technology, may or may not play a central role in community learning networks. When they do, they support and enable either the networking or the learning function, or both.

On the basis of this working definition, the authors developed a framework to account for the three main dimensions — community, network and learning — and one emerging dimension — technologies.

- 1) **Community:** geographical communities and communities of interest must be considered
- 2) **Network:** either physical or virtual, determined by the use of technologies
- 3) **Learning:** a combination of formal, informal, and non-formal
- 4) **Technologies:** level of intensity, nature, and focus — network-specific or learning-specific — need to be taken into consideration

As the authors note, not all “community learning networks” that they have identified in their report meet the criteria of this definition. Defining CLNs is problematic: what is it that all, or perhaps most, of these organizations share? What are the common elements of these organizations that create the appearance of being a community learning network? Are there common goals? In what sense does “community” or “learning” operate as a unifier? In what sense are these organizations “networks?” The issue here is not superficial and not semantic; it’s very much related to why organizations that appear to have something in common might want to work together to further their own ends. A common shared purpose can do much to drive collaboration. A conceptual framework that is accepted across Canada can be the basis for broader recognition and support.

Challenges

What then are the challenges faced by this diverse group of organizations? What are the challenges to increase effective, appropriate, and accessible learning opportunities for all Canadians, regardless of where they live? If the broader goal is to "prepare Canada for a digital world" (from *Preparing Canada for a Digital World*, 1997), and to move towards a society built on knowledge, then what is needed to ensure that all Canadians are lifelong learners?

Finding a Niche — Fulfilling a Need

Canada has in place publicly funded educational institutions that provide learning opportunities to youth (the K-12 system) and to adults (universities, colleges and other institutions). There are also privately funded institutions at all levels that provide an alternative choice for formal education. The private sector offers a variety of learning opportunities for all ages for both work-related and recreational learning. Businesses often provide their own training to staff — formally and informally, directly and indirectly. Not-for-profit organizations also conduct programs, courses, and workshops for the employed and unemployed. The "marketplace" helps to determine the types of programs and learning opportunities that are available. Provincial governments review continuously the curricula of the K-12 system to ensure that students are provided with an appropriate education. Post-secondary institutions, likewise, review their programs and courses periodically to keep up-to-date. The private sector can only operate if there are learners who desire its offerings.

Structurally, a gap exists; this is because there are those (primarily adults) who do not, will not, or cannot avail themselves of the learning opportunities that exist. Adults who are not learners may not be able to contribute to their own well-being, and thus the well-being of the country. In a knowledge-based society, there is less work for those who are not able to contribute any "intangibles — ideas, information, knowledge and intelligence" (*Preparing Canada for a Digital World*, 1997). The work that is available often has a lower pay.

Issues:

- ▲ *How can CLNs fill this gap across all regions and communities of Canada?*
- ▲ *Is a pan-Canadian initiative needed to ensure that all communities have a community learning network structure in place to provide access to learning opportunities and to encourage all to become lifelong learners?*

Coordination

Many of the CLNs that currently exist are coordinating learners with the wide variety of programs that are available. Coordination may involve:

- ▲ *publicizing available learning opportunities;*
- ▲ *providing feedback to providers about what is needed or being requested, or how the process may be improved;*
- ▲ *ensuring that learners know how to access learning opportunities;*
- ▲ *facilitating access to learning opportunities through appropriate technologies; and*
- ▲ *establishing local Internet services so learners have access to computer-mediated learning.*

Issues:

- ▲ *What are the obstacles that CLNs face in order to provide coordination?*
- ▲ *What can be done to ensure that more Canadians avail themselves of the learning opportunities that exist?*
- ▲ *How can "reluctant learners" be enticed to become lifelong learners? What incentives are needed? How can employment opportunities be tied more closely with learning opportunities?*
- ▲ *How can CLNs increase access to effective and appropriate learning opportunities?*

Access

Information, communications, and other technologies are rapidly changing how learners can access programs, courses and information. Distance education is evolving into a significant component of the public education system, particularly at the post-secondary level. Advances in multimedia technologies and telecommunications infrastructures have created opportunities for very sophisticated and pedagogically sound learning experiences.

Despite these changes, there are still Canadians without personal telephone service, computers, or access to the Internet. For those individuals with Internet access, the issue is now becoming one of bandwidth: how much and how quickly can data be downloaded (and to some degree uploaded)? Multimedia transmissions are similar to TV signals because they use both video and audio signals; they require lots of bandwidth. For those who live in major urban areas, cable companies are now providing high-speed Internet access (at a cost, of course). Rural residents do not always have this access. The technology for low-altitude satellite wireless transmission is developing, but costs are sometimes prohibitive. The telecommunications industry is advancing rapidly, but universal access is still in the future.

Issues

- ▲ *How can CLNs assist learners to obtain the necessary access to programs and courses that use sophisticated telecommunications technologies?*
- ▲ *What kind of access is needed, and for whom? Under what circumstances? How much and how often?*
- ▲ *How can CLNs provide learners with the help that some need to learn how to use these technologies?*
- ▲ *There are initiatives across Canada to expand public access to computers and the Internet through libraries and other public spaces (Issues Paper on Social Access to Learning Technologies, March 1997, Office of Learning Technologies). What role can CLNs play in this process?*
- ▲ *What are the issues that learners face with respect to access to learning opportunities?*

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- ▲ *Are there issues differentiated by the living conditions, gender, culture, or physical challenges of the learner?*
 - ▲ *What technical issues would benefit from national coordination?*

Collaboration and Partnerships

Community learning networks are creatures of a variety of partnership models: consultative, contributory, operational and collaborative (*Models of Community Learning Networks in Canada*). The inter-relationships between institutions, government agencies, community organizations, and the private sector are critical to understanding how CLNs work, or can work. There are no clear distinctions in terms of responsibilities or mandates, and each enterprise is dependent on the other in some way.

Issues:

- ▲ *What types of partnerships serve or will serve CLNs best, given their goals and mandates?*
- ▲ *How are partnerships created and sustained?*
- ▲ *What types of institutions, agencies, organizations and businesses should be considered for partnerships or collaboration? What roles should each entity play?*

Roles

Each community learning network may play a somewhat different role, depending on its purpose and mandate, as well as the roles that others play in the partnership. Sometimes roles are assumed. An analysis of the local circumstances may suggest that a direct leadership style is necessary to initiate activity, or that a supportive and collegial role is most appropriate to ensure that all partners have a voice. But it is also wise to consider the roles that each participant *should* play, and how the organization should be structured to support or create these roles.

Issues:

- ▲ *What roles are needed to finance, coordinate, promote, and hold CLNs accountable to their community members?*

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- ▲ *What role should the learner play? Is there a long-term goal to have all learners become self-directed and independent, and develop the skills and attitude to be a lifelong learner? What conditions would create, support and sustain this type of behaviour?*
 - ▲ *What roles should local institutions, business, and community partners play? How can these roles be clarified, understood and agreed upon?*
 - ▲ *What role does government (federal, provincial and municipal) play? What role should it play?*
 - ▲ *How can CLNs ensure that the needs of each participant organization are met, or even understood?*

Sustainability

Community learning networks owe their existence to a variety of circumstances and driving forces. Some were created by government. Others were created by individual community members, who were able to generate support from a variety of sources; these CLNs are often dependent on fragile relationships and goodwill. Financial support is often from a level of government. Historically, private-sector support has not been long term.

Issues:

- ▲ *Are there particular structures that provide greater prospects for the continuity of CLNs?*
- ▲ *Which stakeholders, including learners, have a vested interest in maintaining the service provided by CLNs?*
- ▲ *How can medium- to long-term commitment be obtained from these stakeholders?*

Accountability

It is often difficult for social and educational programs and services to measure their broad goals, such as community self-sufficiency or the overall impact on learning. Community learning networks, through their annual

goals and plans, do have measurable outcomes, however. By reporting on these results, CLNs provide their stakeholders with justification for continued support.

Issues:

- ▲ *What types of performance measures (for example, the percentage of learners who are participating in formal and informal learning opportunities) would best indicate how well CLNs are doing?*
- ▲ *What assessment tools, instruments, or existing data sources are available to gather appropriate information?*
- ▲ *How can the results obtained be best reported to relevant stakeholders?*

Sharing

The First Pan-Canadian Forum on Community Learning Networks provides each participant with an ideal opportunity to discuss the many issues that CLNs share, and to help everyone face the challenge of ensuring that Canada becomes a society based on knowledge. This forum provides a unique experience for collective problem-solving, and an opportunity to create new knowledge; in essence to "walk the talk."

Many forum participants have stories of their successes: how community representation was nurtured; how partnerships evolved; how funding was obtained; the catalysts that drove the initiative; what strategies are maintaining the organization; what goals have been achieved. This forum will provide opportunities for these stories to be shared.

But more than that, it will also provide an opportunity for all the good ideas, clarification of issues, and problem-solving to be collected and developed into a tool kit. This tool kit will be developed to assist current and aspiring community learning networks to move forward, with the collected wisdom of forum participants at their fingertips. We invite you to accept this challenge.

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février 1998

*Premier colloque
pancanadien
sur les réseaux
d'apprentissage
communautaires*

Document de travail

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Bureau des technologies d'apprentissage
Office of Learning Technologies



Développement des
ressources humaines Canada

Human Resources
Development Canada

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Contact Nord

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Accès par l'innovation

Le présent guide de discussion a été préparé pour le Bureau des technologies d'apprentissage et Contact North/Contact Nord par Doug Knight, PhD, associé de recherche du Contact North/Contact Nord. Il servira lors du colloque co-commandité sur les réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires qui aura lieu du 27 au 29 mars 1998.

Les opinions exprimées dans le guide sont celles des consultants, et elles ne reflètent pas nécessairement le point de vue du Bureau des technologies d'apprentissage, de Développement des ressources humaines Canada ou de Contact North/Contact Nord.

Une révolution sociale, économique et culturelle est à transformer le monde. Les règles du jeu ont complètement changé. Il faut absolument que le Canada se hâte pour relever les nouveaux défis et profiter des avantages qu'offrent ce nouvel âge.

Préparer le Canada au monde numérique, 1997

Si le Canada espère se développer comme société érigée sur le savoir, les réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires auront un rôle de premier plan à jouer. Par votre participation à ce Premier colloque pancanadien sur les réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires, vous êtes appelé à relever un défi qui aidera à déterminer le rang qu'occupera le Canada en tant que société fondée sur le savoir et à se maintenir à l'avant-garde sur la scène mondiale.

Une « société fondée sur le savoir » attend des citoyens qu'ils cherchent à apprendre des choses nouvelles et qu'ils inventent de nouvelles façons de travailler et d'apprendre. Ces citoyens, grâce à leur base de connaissances, ajoutent de la valeur à des produits, des procédés et des services. Quel que soit le nom qu'on donne au nouvel ordre mondial en train de naître, « sociétés fondées sur le savoir », « économies informationnelles » ou « économies numériques », cette réalité dépend des gens et des organisations communautaires qui créent des conditions et des milieux propices au changement et à l'apprentissage.

Les infrastructures technologiques de l'information et des communications nécessaires au soutien d'une société fondée sur le savoir deviennent de plus en plus complexes et envahissantes. Elles pourraient creuser rapidement un fossé entre riches et pauvres. En effet, les pays en voie de développement qui veulent accélérer leur croissance économique et sociale font de lourds investissements dans ces infrastructures technologiques. Les pays qui ne le font pas, ou qui ne peuvent pas le faire, continueront à connaître des difficultés économiques. Dans les pays développés comme le Canada, c'est le différentiel d'accès à ces technologies qui crée un problème de disparité économique et sociale.

On examine à l'heure actuelle les infrastructures organisationnelles, tant les établissements d'enseignement publics, que les organismes communautaires, et les entreprises du secteur privé, afin de déterminer si leurs structures et leurs conceptions répondent aux exigences qui surgissent chez les apprenants à vie. Les établissements d'enseignement publics élaborent rapidement des programmes accessibles à tous, en tous temps, et en tous lieux. Le secteur

privé continue à investir dans la formation et le recyclage ainsi que dans l'élaboration de modèles d'apprentissage adaptés au monde du travail. Des organismes communautaires tels que

- ▲ *l'Accès communautaire à Internet de Lumby, Colombie-Britannique*
- ▲ *le Centre entrepreneuriat de North Sydney, Nouvelle-Écosse*
- ▲ *les Cercles d'apprentissage de l'Edmonton Learning Link*
- ▲ *le Port au Port Community Education Initiative, Terre-Neuve*
- ▲ *le Lanark Communications Network dans l'est de l'Ontario*¹

veulent rejoindre des apprenants, actuels et éventuels, à la fois en milieu urbain et dans les coins isolés du pays. Le nouvel objectif qui mobilise le Canada consiste à mettre l'apprentissage à la portée des apprenants, à leur offrir des services aussi bien que des crédits, à devenir redevable tant à l'apprenant qu'à la population en général.

Il reste toutefois que de nombreuses personnes ne peuvent pas, ou ne veulent pas, se prévaloir des possibilités d'apprentissage qui sont actuellement à leur disposition. Nos établissements d'enseignement traditionnels ne sont pas toujours en mesure d'offrir ces possibilités à ceux qui ne veulent pas, ou ne savent pas, ou ne croient pas pouvoir devenir des apprenants à vie. Les réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires, ou encore des organismes semblables qui portent un autre nom, ont été établis partout au Canada, de fait partout dans le monde, pour lancer une corde à ceux qui ont besoin d'aide pour réaliser des objectifs d'apprentissage formels et informels. Le concept de développement communautaire a atteint une dimension nouvelle et les technologies d'apprentissage transportent le monde jusqu'au seuil de nos portes.

Les réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires

Les réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires (RAC) ne sont pas encore solidement implantés partout au Canada. Un bilan préparé pour le Bureau des technologies d'apprentissage (BTA), intitulé *Modèles de réseaux*

¹ Vous trouverez ces études de cas dans *Modèles de réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires au Canada*, rapport préparé pour le Bureau des technologies d'apprentissage, 1997.

d'apprentissage communautaires au Canada, fournit une vue d'ensemble initiale de l'état des RAC au Canada. La meilleure façon de décrire les RAC, c'est de dire qu'ils sont naissants, à l'état d'hybride, complexes et bien placés pour contribuer à réaliser une société fondée sur le savoir.

Il n'y a pas qu'un seul modèle de réseau d'apprentissage communautaire au Canada. Les exemples suivants en montrent la diversité.² Les mentions accompagnées d'un astérisque (*) sont financées par le BTA.

Mid-Island Inter-Agency Group (Nanaimo, Colombie-Britannique)

Le Mid-Island Inter-Agency Group est une association d'institutions, d'organismes et d'entreprises qui offre des services de formation, d'orientation professionnelle et d'information sur les carrières aux clients de la région. Sa mission est de « faciliter la communication et des relations de travail positives avec les organismes de financement et parmi les organismes-membres afin de rehausser le service à la communauté. »

On-Line, In Business, At Home* (Burnaby, Colombie-Britannique)

On-Line, In Business, At Home est un projet de recherche active qui vise à évaluer les besoins des apprenants adultes ayant des handicaps physiques. Il effectue également des essais sur le terrain pour évaluer l'applicabilité et l'efficacité d'Internet et de la vidéoconférence comme moyens d'offrir aux adultes ayant des handicaps physiques, des activités d'apprentissage à domicile, dans leur milieu de travail et dans des centres d'apprentissage. Ce projet est parrainé par l'Open Learning Agency en partenariat avec la Neil Squire Foundation, la BC Coalition of People with Disabilities, la BC Paraplegic Association, l'Institut national canadien pour les aveugles, la Société d'Arthrite, Special Education and Technology BC, CRANE Resource Centre, UBC (l'Université de la Colombie-Britannique) et les OLA Disabilities Services.

Le St. Albert Continuous Learning Community (St. Albert, Alberta)

Le St. Albert Continuous Learning Community a évolué à partir de discussions initiales tenues par un petit groupe sur l'apprentissage à vie et les obstacles communautaires pour devenir un réseau de bénévoles dont la mission est d'« encourager les gens à acquérir des connaissances et à réaliser une prospérité durable grâce à l'apprentissage à vie ». Cette organisation a

² Source : *Modèles de réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires au Canada*, 1997.

établi un certain nombre de partenariats, y compris TELUS (le système de télécommunications provincial), l'Athabasca University, VICOM Multimedia, ACCESS — The Education Station, la ville de St. Albert, le Congress Board of Alberta et le Quality Council of Alberta.

Community Economic Development Training (nord de la Saskatchewan)

Le Community Economic Development Training (CED) est un projet de formation qui engage les habitants de sept communautés du nord; ces gens participeront à un programme exécuté par Internet qui a été conçu pour accroître la capacité de développement économique communautaire. Les partenaires de ce projet comprennent la Northeast Economic Development Association, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, Cumberland House Cree Nation, New Careers Corporation, Future Skills Program, le Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, SaskTel, le village de Sandy Bay, le village de Pelican Narrows et la ville de Cumberland House.

Women and Rural Economic Development Network (Ontario)

Le Women and Rural Economic Development Network est une organisation provinciale à but non lucratif. Sa mission est de « promouvoir la participation des femmes au développement économique rural de l'Ontario en rendant accessible une formation en affaires et des compétences ainsi que des occasions de mise en réseau ». L'organisation est dirigée par un conseil d'administration formé de membres féminins du milieu rural. Le financement provient des gouvernements provincial et fédéral, et de diverses organisations, institutions et entreprises communautaires.

Learning Enrichment Foundation (Toronto, Ontario)

La Learning Enrichment Foundation est un organisme de bienfaisance à but non lucratif tourné vers le développement social et économique de la communauté. Il gère une variété de programmes pour les sans emploi, les immigrants et les élèves ayant besoin de l'anglais, langue seconde. Les programmes incluent l'alphabétisation, des rudiments de calcul et de la formation axée sur des compétences dans les services d'alimentation, la construction, les soins aux enfants, l'informatique et les affaires.

Contact North/Contact Nord (nord de l'Ontario)

Contact North/Contact Nord est une société sans but lucratif qui peut se targuer d'être le plus grand réseau d'éducation à distance au Canada. Son mandat est d'aider les habitants du nord de l'Ontario, particulièrement ceux

des communautés éloignées, les Francophones et les Autochtones à accéder à des possibilités d'apprentissage formelles et informelles. Contact North/*Contact Nord* dessert en ce moment 150 sites communautaires et plus de 11 000 étudiants sont inscrits à plus de 650 cours offerts par des écoles secondaires, des collèges et des universités. De concert avec des partenaires des secteurs public et privé, Contact North/*Contact Nord* appuie l'innovation en apprentissage et cherche activement à combler les besoins des résidents du nord de l'Ontario lorsque vient le temps de tenir des réunions à distance, de communiquer avec des clients et d'offrir de la formation au personnel. (Site Web : <http://www.cnorth.edu.on.ca>)

Just-In-Time Learning and Information Network* (Toronto, Ontario)

L'Ontario Network of Employment Skills Training Projects (ONESTeP), organisme provincial à but non lucratif qui en chapeaute d'autres, est à concevoir un réseau d'apprentissage qui utilisera les technologies informatiques pour relier les organismes, les clients, les entreprises et le public. Le but du projet Just-In-Time Learning and Information Network est d'identifier, de promouvoir, d'animer et de faciliter l'utilisation des technologies d'information afin de saisir les meilleures pratiques à la grandeur du Canada, d'augmenter l'échange d'information concernant ces pratiques, d'examiner et d'évaluer les technologies liées à la formation axée sur la communauté et offrir des possibilités de développement professionnel pour les praticiens.

Janus Project: Promises and Prospects of Technology and Women's Learning* (Toronto, Ontario)

Le Projet Janus a été mené pour sensibiliser aux défis et aux occasions que les technologies d'apprentissage offrent aux femmes. Une étude a été publiée qui expose les grandes lignes des tendances et des questions, ainsi que des domaines qui exigent une plus ample exploration.

Observatoire du multimédia de formation* (Montréal, Québec)

L'objectif principal de l'Observatoire du multimédia de formation est de développer des liens entre les différents intervenants, comme les entreprises, le gouvernement, les établissements d'apprentissage et le public. On est à construire un site Web qui agira comme bureau central d'information pour les utilisateurs intéressés aux outils de développement et aux modèles d'apprentissage utilisés dans les technologies d'apprentissage multimédia.

Iqalaaq, Rankin Inlet Community Access Centre (Territoires du Nord-Ouest)

La mission du Rankin Inlet Community Access Centre, Iqalaaq est de « présenter l'ordinateur comme une fenêtre ouverte sur l'avenir, accessible à tous afin que notre communauté puisse apprendre collectivement ». Un de ses objectifs est de garantir que tous les membres de la communauté aient accès à la technologie informatique et à Internet, peu importe leurs aptitudes ou leurs ressources. Ce projet est parrainé par des organismes des secteurs public et privé.

Testing a Learning Model for People with Disabilities* (Lunenburg, Nouvelle-Écosse)

Parrainé par l'Assistive Technology Centre (ATC) à Lunenburg, Nouvelle-Écosse, ce projet fera des analyses sur un modèle pour offrir des cours de formation de base, utilisant des technologies informatiques adaptées, pour les adultes handicapés qui vivent dans les régions rurales. L'ATC travaille en partenariat avec l'Acadia University Education Department, l'Employment Outreach Office à Bridgewater, le Lunenburg HS Community Computer Lab, la Mahone Bay Computer Network Society, la Community Learning Initiative à Bridgewater et la Disabled Persons Commission (organisme provincial).

Strategic Technology Application for Rural Telework (START)* (Clarendville, Terre-Neuve)

Le projet START élabore des modèles d'apprentissage par ordinateur pour aider les apprenants adultes des communautés rurales qui ont des capacités postsecondaires, mais qui ont besoin de formation et d'accès à la technologie pour apprendre et travailler à distance. Ce projet est parrainé par l'Eastern College of Applied Arts, Technology and Continuing Education.

Les fondements conceptuels

La documentation limitée qui existe au sujet des RAC est éparpillée dans une diversité de sources, divergente sur le plan conceptuel, et dépourvue de définition, de modèle et d'objet. Il existe bien une assise de développement communautaire, mais l'incorporation d'éléments nouveaux tels que l'apprentissage à vie, les partenariats avec les secteurs public et privé, la collaboration avec les établissements d'enseignement, et les infrastructures de télécommunications, ainsi que l'accent mis sur ces éléments nouveaux, semblent

donner lieu à un concept nouveau. Il y a de nombreuses configurations, et de nombreux organismes, chacun aussi différent que les communautés desservies. Et les objectifs que poursuivent ces divers organismes peuvent varier, allant d'objectifs généraux de développement communautaire jusqu'à l'amélioration de l'accès à l'éducation.

Les auteurs du bilan du BTA ont fourni la définition suivante, pour fins de travail, des réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires. Il s'agit...

de structures et de systèmes gérés par la communauté visant à promouvoir le développement communautaire et à enrichir la vie de ses habitants en soutenant et en encourageant l'apprentissage à vie.

Pour être pertinents, les réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires doivent fonctionner à l'intérieur des limites d'une communauté circonscrite sur le plan géographique que l'on peut aussi définir comme communauté d'intérêt.

Les technologies, y compris la technologie des communications, peuvent jouer ou non un rôle central dans les réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires. Mais lorsqu'elles le font, elles soutiennent et favorisent ou bien la formation de réseaux, ou bien l'apprentissage, ou les deux.

C'est à partir de cette définition descriptive que les auteurs ont tracé un encadrement qui tient compte de trois éléments principaux (la communauté, le réseau et l'apprentissage) ainsi qu'un élément émergent — les technologies.

- 1) **La communauté** : On doit tenir compte des communautés géographiques ainsi que des communautés d'intérêt.
- 2) **Le réseau** : Qu'il soit matériel ou virtuel, il est déterminé par l'utilisation de la technologie.
- 3) **L'apprentissage** : Une combinaison du formel, de l'informel et du non formel.
- 4) **Les technologies** : Son degré d'intensité, sa nature et son point de mire — axé sur le réseautage ou l'apprentissage — devant être pris en considération.

Comme le notent les auteurs, ce ne sont pas tous les « réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires » dont ils font état dans leur bilan qui répondent aux critères de la définition qui précède. Effectivement, définir le RAC pose des

problèmes : qu'est-ce que tous ces organismes, ou du moins presque tous, ont en commun? Quels sont les éléments communs à ces organismes qui leur donnent l'apparence qu'ils sont des réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires? Ont-ils des objectifs communs? En quel sens les mots « communautaire » ou « apprentissage » servent-ils d'élément unificateur? En quel sens ces organismes sont-ils des « réseaux »? Ce ne sont pas là des questions de surface ou de sémantique; ces questions sont bien posées pour déterminer pourquoi des organismes qui semblent avoir des points communs pourraient vouloir travailler ensemble afin de répondre à leurs propres besoins. Un objectif partagé peut motiver dans le sens de la collaboration. De plus, un encadrement conceptuel accepté à l'échelle du Canada peut susciter une reconnaissance et un appui plus larges.

Les défis

Quels sont donc les défis à relever pour ces divers groupes d'organismes? Quels défis attendent ceux qui veulent rendre plus efficaces, adaptées et accessibles les possibilités d'apprentissage, et ce pour tous les Canadiens, où qu'ils habitent? Si l'objectif plus vaste est de « préparer le Canada en vue d'un monde numérique » (*Préparer le Canada au monde numérique*, 1997) et de se diriger ainsi vers une société érigée sur le savoir, que faut-il alors pour assurer que tous les Canadiens deviennent des apprenants à vie?

Trouver la voie — Répondre à un besoin

Il y a en place au Canada des établissements d'enseignement à financement public qui offrent des possibilités d'apprentissage à nos jeunes (le système J-12) et aux adultes (les universités, les collèges et autres établissements d'enseignement). Il existe aussi des établissements à financement privé à tous les paliers qui offrent d'autres choix en matière d'éducation formelle. Le secteur privé offre aux personnes de tous âges une foule de possibilités d'apprentissage liées au travail comme aux loisirs. Les entreprises assurent souvent la formation de leur personnel — de façon formelle et informelle, directement et indirectement. Les organismes sans but lucratif donnent des sessions, des cours, des ateliers à ceux qui travaillent et aux sans emploi. C'est en effet le marché du travail qui aide à déterminer le genre de programme ou d'éducation qui sera offert. Les gouvernements provinciaux révisent constamment les programmes d'étude du système J-12 pour

s'assurer que les élèves reçoivent une éducation appropriée. Quant aux établissements postsecondaires, ils révisent régulièrement leurs cours et programmes pour les maintenir à jour. Le secteur privé ne peut fonctionner que s'il y a des apprenants qui veulent se prévaloir de ce qu'il a à offrir.

Ainsi, il existe un vide sur le plan structurel parce qu'il y a des personnes (surtout des adultes) qui ne se prévalent pas, ne se prévaudront pas, ou ne peuvent pas se prévaloir des possibilités d'apprentissage qui existent. Les adultes qui ne sont pas des apprenants ne seront peut-être pas en mesure de contribuer à leur propre bien-être et donc au bien-être du pays. Dans une société fondée sur le savoir, il y a moins de travail pour ceux qui ne peuvent pas contribuer « aux réalités intangibles que sont les idées, l'information, le savoir et l'intelligence » (*Préparer le Canada au monde numérique*, 1997). Le travail qui leur est offert est souvent moins bien rémunéré.

Les défis

- ▲ *Les RAC peuvent-ils remplir ce vide dans toutes les régions et toutes les communautés du Canada?*
- ▲ *Faut-il un projet pancanadien pour faire en sorte que toutes les communautés disposent d'une structure de RAC qui offre l'accès à l'éducation et qui encourage tous et chacun à devenir des apprenants à vie ?*

Coordination

Nombre des RAC qui existent actuellement fournissent aux apprenants la coordination qui leur permet d'être au courant du vaste éventail de programmes déjà disponibles. Cette coordination peut signifier :

- ▲ *annoncer les programmes d'apprentissage disponibles;*
- ▲ *fournir à ceux qui offrent les programmes de la rétroaction quant aux besoins, aux demandes et aux améliorations possibles;*
- ▲ *faire en sorte que les apprenants sachent comment avoir accès aux possibilités d'apprentissage;*
- ▲ *faciliter cet accès au moyen de technologies appropriées; et*
- ▲ *offrir des services Internet local pour que les apprenants puissent avoir accès à l'apprentissage informatisé.*

Les défis

- ▲ *Quels obstacles les RAC doivent-ils surmonter afin d'offrir cette coordination?*
- ▲ *Que faut-il faire pour s'assurer que plus de Canadiens profitent des possibilités d'éducation à leur disposition?*
- ▲ *Comment persuader les « apprenants hésitants » de devenir des apprenants à vie? Comment peut-on les motiver? Comment créer un lien plus étroit entre les possibilités d'emploi et les possibilités d'apprentissage?*
- ▲ *Comment les RAC peuvent-ils faciliter l'accès à un apprentissage efficace et approprié?*

Accès

Les technologies d'information, de communications et autres modifient rapidement la façon avec laquelle les apprenants ont accès aux programmes, aux cours et à l'information. L'éducation à distance est en voie de devenir une composante importante du système d'enseignement public, notamment au postsecondaire. Les progrès réalisés dans les domaines des technologies multimédia et des infrastructures de télécommunications créent la possibilité d'assurer une éducation à la fois très sophistiquée et très solide sur le plan pédagogique.

En dépit de ces progrès, il y a encore des Canadiens qui n'ont pas encore de service téléphonique personnel, d'ordinateur ou d'accès à Internet. Pour ceux qui ont accès à Internet, le problème qui surgit en est un de largeur de bande : quel volume de données peut être téléchargé (et jusqu'à un certain point téléchargé) et en combien de temps? Les transmissions multimédia ressemblent à une diffusion télévisée en raison du signal vidéo et audio; elles exigent une grande largeur de bande. Pour les habitants des grands centres urbains, les câblodistributeurs sont en mesure de fournir un accès rapide à Internet (moyennant des frais, bien entendu). Mais les ruraux n'ont pas cet accès. La technologie de la transmission sans fil à basse altitude a beau progresser, les coûts sont parfois inabordables. L'industrie des télécommunications se développe rapidement, mais l'accès universel reste encore à venir.

Les défis

- ▲ *Comment les RAC peuvent-ils aider les apprenants à accéder facilement à des programmes et à des cours qui font appel à des technologies de télécommunications sophistiquées?*
- ▲ *Quel type d'accès faut-il, et pour qui? En quelles circonstances? Avec quel volume et à quelle fréquence?*
- ▲ *Comment les RAC peuvent-ils offrir aux apprenants l'aide dont certains ont besoin pour apprendre à se servir de ces technologies?*
- ▲ *Des projets ont été mis de l'avant partout au Canada pour étendre l'accès public aux ordinateurs et à Internet au moyen des bibliothèques et autres espaces publics (Accès social concernant les technologies d'apprentissage, mars 1997, Bureau des technologies d'apprentissage). Quel rôle les RAC peuvent-ils jouer dans cette démarche?*
- ▲ *Quels sont les problèmes que doivent envisager les apprenants par rapport à l'accès à l'éducation?*
- ▲ *Ces problèmes varient-ils selon les conditions de vie, le sexe, la culture ou les handicaps physiques des apprenants?*
- ▲ *Quels sont les problèmes techniques qui pourraient être soulagés à la faveur d'une coordination nationale?*

Collaboration et partenariats

Les réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires sont le résultat de partenariats de types consultatif, accessoire, fonctionnel et coopératif (*Modèles de réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires au Canada*). Le rapport interactif entre les établissements d'enseignement, les organismes gouvernementaux, les organismes communautaires et le secteur privé est essentiel à une bonne compréhension du fonctionnement actuel ou possible des RAC. Les responsabilités ne sont pas toujours clairement définies, ni les mandats, et toute entreprise de ce genre dépend en quelque sorte d'une autre.

Les défis

- ▲ *Quels types de partenariats sont susceptibles de servir le plus grand bien des RAC, compte tenu de leurs objectifs et de leurs mandats?*

- ▲ *Comment faut-il créer et maintenir ces partenariats?*
- ▲ *Quels types d'établissements, d'agences, d'organismes et d'entreprises doit-on considérer pour trouver des partenaires ou des collaborateurs? Quels rôles doit-on assigner à chacun?*

Rôles

Tous les réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires peuvent être appelés à jouer un rôle quelque peu différent, selon le mandat et les objectifs de chacun, de même que selon les rôles joués par les autres dans ce partenariat. Certains rôles sont présumés. Une analyse des circonstances locales peut indiquer qu'il faut un style de leadership direct afin d'amorcer une activité, ou encore qu'un rôle collégial de soutien est le plus apte à assurer que tous les partenaires aient une voix. Mais il convient aussi de considérer les rôles que chacun des participants *devrait* assumer afin que l'organisme puisse être structuré de manière à soutenir ces rôles ou même à pouvoir les créer.

Les défis

- ▲ *Quels rôles doit-on prévoir afin de financer, coordonner, promouvoir et régir les RAC et les responsabiliser?*
- ▲ *Quel est le rôle de l'apprenant? L'objectif à long terme est-il de faire en sorte que tous les apprenants deviennent autonomes et indépendants, et de développer les compétences et les attitudes qui caractérisent l'apprenant à vie? Quelles sont les conditions qui créeraient, soutiendraient et feraient durer ce type de comportement?*
- ▲ *Quels rôles doivent jouer les partenaires locaux que sont les établissements d'enseignement, les entreprises et la communauté? Comment peut-on clarifier et comprendre ces rôles et s'entendre à leur sujet?*
- ▲ *Quel est le rôle des administrations publiques (fédéral, provincial et municipal)? Quel rôle ces administrations devraient-elles jouer?*
- ▲ *Comment les RAC peuvent-ils s'assurer de répondre aux besoins des organismes participants, ou même de les comprendre?*

Viabilité

Les réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires doivent leur existence à un concours de circonstances et de forces motrices diverses. Certains sont la création d'une administration publique. D'autres ont été conçus par des particuliers dans les communautés qui ont su aller puiser du soutien à différentes sources; ces RAC dépendent souvent de rapports interpersonnels ténus et de la bonne volonté des gens. L'appui financier provient souvent d'une administration publique. Depuis toujours, le soutien du secteur privé ne dure pas longtemps.

Les défis

- ▲ *Quelles structures seraient les plus aptes à assurer une meilleure continuité aux RAC?*
- ▲ *Parmi les principaux intervenants, y compris les apprenants, lesquels ont un intérêt direct à maintenir les services offerts par les RAC?*
- ▲ *Comment peut-on assurer un engagement de moyen à long terme de la part de ces personnes intéressées?*

Responsabilité

Il est souvent difficile pour des programmes et services éducatifs d'évaluer leurs objectifs généraux, comme l'autonomie communautaire ou l'impact global sur l'apprentissage. Les réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires, par le biais de leurs objectifs et projets annuels, obtiennent toutefois des résultats qu'on peut mesurer. C'est en faisant état de ces résultats que les RAC peuvent justifier devant leurs principaux intéressés le besoin de leur appui continu.

Les défis

- ▲ *Quelles sortes d'évaluations de rendement, comme par exemple le pourcentage d'apprenants qui profitent des possibilités éducatives formelles et informelles, seraient les plus aptes à déterminer la valeur des RAC?*
- ▲ *Quels outils d'évaluation, quels instruments, quelles sources de données actuelles sont-ils disponibles pour recueillir les renseignements appropriés?*

▲ *Quelle serait la meilleure façon de communiquer les résultats aux principaux intéressés?*

Partage

Le Premier colloque pancanadien sur les réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires offre l'occasion toute désignée à ses participants de traiter des nombreuses questions que les RAC se posent, et d'aider chacun à relever le défi de faire en sorte que le Canada devienne une société fondée sur le savoir. Ce colloque se veut de plus une chance unique en son genre pour faire l'expérience de la recherche collective de solutions et de créer, effectivement, du savoir nouveau, en somme de donner le ton.

Un grand nombre de participants au colloque ont des réussites à raconter : comment la représentation de la communauté est entretenue, comment les partenariats évoluent, comment le financement a été obtenu, les catalyseurs qui mènent le projet, les stratégies qui maintiennent l'organisation, les buts qui ont été atteints. Au cours du colloque, vous aurez l'occasion d'échanger au sujet de ces réussites.

De plus, vous aurez aussi l'occasion de partager toutes vos bonnes idées, d'éclaircir certaines questions et de résoudre des problèmes pour rassembler et élaborer une trousse d'outils. Cette trousse d'outils sera créée pour aider les réseaux d'apprentissage communautaires à se lancer, grâce à la sagesse collective et immédiatement accessible des participants au colloque. Nous vous invitons à relever ce défi.

Références

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